Tuesday, June 24, 2008 • 6 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 200 #13 website www.inquirer.net

Gov't grounds Sulpicio ships; inquiries set

By Leila B. Salaverria and Riza T. Olchondra

MARITIME AUTHORITIES YESTERDAY suspended the operations of all vessels of Sulpicio Lines Inc., one of the Philippines' biggest interisland shipping firms, whose 35-year history of ferrying passengers between islands has been marred by four sea tragedies.

The decision by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) to ground the entire Sulpicio fleet coincided with a move in the Senate to investigate the disaster, and a call from the House of Representatives for the revocation of the licenses of shipping companies which had been repeatedly involved

GOV'T GROUNDS A6

Panlilio files plunder raps against Bong Pineda

ACROSS/ A15

BIR seeks dismissal of 51 collectors

BUSINESS / B1

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

EDNA Telan prays the rosary outside the Sulpicio Lines passenger terminal office in Cebu City.

ONLY A PORTION of the 23,800-ton ferry MV Princess of the Stars, which capsized off Sibuyan Island in Romblon on Saturday, is visible. The ferry, which sailed from Manila on Friday on a 22-hour trip to Cebu City, carried more than 700 passengers and 121 crew members.

57 ship survivors so far

'Captain's call to jump ship came too late'

By Dello Mallari in Lucena City and Tarra Quismundo in Manila

THE ORDER TO ABANDON ship came too late, turning a storm-tossed sea into a graveyard for hundreds of people aboard the ill-starred MV Princess of the Stars.

"The ship was already heavily tilted to the left," said Susan Lisbo, when the ship captain sounded the alarm as Typhoon "Frank" swept across the Philippines, unleashing monstrous waves and violent winds that sank the ferry with 849 passengers and crewmembers aboard on Saturday.

The order from Capt. Florencio Marinas came "too late," said Lisbo, one of 28 survivors who clung to a lifeboat that miraculously drifted to the coastal village of Dunlang Yani in Mulanay town in Quezon, at around 9 a.m. on Sunday.

At least 29 others were reported to have been found alive, bringing to 57 the total number of survivors recovered, according to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC). Another 28 were reported to have died

57 SHIP! A6

SATURDAY SURVIVORS From left, Jonathan Pinlac, 27, from Cebu City and Fausto Cales, 33, from Bicol, get treatment at the Quezon Medical Center in Lucena City, while Renato Barro Lanuras, 35, relives the nightmare on the ship at the police station in San Fernando town, Romblon, on Monday.

No sign of life: Divers ordered to bore hole in hull

By Nikko Dizon and Leila B. Salaverria

DIVERS HAVE BEEN ORDERED to cut a hole with blow torches through the hull of the upturned MV Princess of the Stars to confirm if there are still survivors inside after rescuers pounding on its walls earlier heard no signs of life.

Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo, commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), told reporters yesterday that it was possible that there were air pockets inside the doomed ferry where survivors could be found.

"We have given instructions to start coming up with an opening on the hull to facilitate the access of the divers. We gave them permission to use cutters in making an opening on the hull," Tamayo said.

Fourteen divers from the PCG and the Philippine Navy were involved in the effort.

PCG boats searched the area around the ferry, which

NO SIGN A6

Hopes fade for those missing in flood

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas
Kristine L. Alave, Nikko Dizon and Jocelyn R. Uy
in Manila

THE PROVINCES OF ILOILO, Aklan, Capiz and Antique as well as Iloilo City were placed under a state of calamity as the death toll from the powerful sweep by Typhoon "Frank" mounted yesterday.

Hopes faded by the hour that large groups of survivors might be found in areas where communications were cut off by the weekend typhoon that left at least 362 people dead in flooded communities, The Associated Press reported.

Most of the victims drowned in floods.

Sen. Richard Gordon, head of the Philippine National Red Cross, gave a lower death toll when contacted by the Inquirer last night. He said there were 328 confirmed dead around the country and that the Red Cross was still verifying reports of 19 other deaths, mostly children, in Iloilo.

After painstaking wide sweeps

HOPES A14

LEFT BEHIND In Manila, Heidee Laurel (left) cries and pleads for help from a reporter on Monday when she learned that her parents and five siblings were on the MV Princess of the Stars. Alipia Carreon (right) holds a picture of her missing brother close to her eye.

Gov't, courts accused of going soft on ship firm

TWO LAWYERS YESTERDAY lashed out at the government and the courts for allowing Sulpicio Lines to get away with one of the worst maritime disasters without the shipping company having to pay hefty damages to the families of most of the victims, or its owners and officers having to serve time in prison.

"That's why [these accidents] are repeated ... The courts don't

GOV'T, COURTS A6

Ill-starred ship pride of Sulpicio

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Leila B. Salaverria

THE DOOMED PRINCESS OF the Stars was the pride in the Sulpicio Lines galaxy.

The 23,800-ton vessel acquired from Japan at a cost of $5 million was the largest in the shipping company's fleet. It had no record of any malfunction or mechanical trouble.

ILL-STARRED A6

'Frank' spoils GMA trip to US

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA (VIA PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday issued seven directives, including the giving of assistance to victims of the MV Princess of the Stars sinking by the government and the ship's owners, and the opening of donation accounts by Philippine embassies in the United States, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

The President cut short a speech before the Filipino community here to preside over a teleconference with the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) in Manila

FRANK A4

House of Usher up for sale on Internet

SYDNEY—A LOVELORN MAN who put his life in Australia up for sale on the Internet was one step closer to starting over as Monday as bids for his house, job and lifestyle hit A$2.2 million

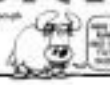
HOUSE A14

A1 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008

WEATHER FORECAST

Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Isabela/Cauayan	Mostly Cloudy
Dagupan	Mostly Cloudy	Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rain	Tacloban	Rain Showers
Cam. Norte	Mostly Cloudy	Sta. Cruz/Laguna	Mostly Cloudy
Batangas	Mostly Cloudy	Calapan/Mdr	Mostly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Puerto P. (Pal.)	Mostly Cloudy
Cuyo	Mostly Cloudy	Iloilo	Mostly Cloudy
Cebu	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE



EZ2 POUR DIGIT
30 28 — 4 0 9 6

SUERTRES
1 0 0 — 4 1 8

7 6 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45
5 12 23 29 44
P132,316,630.20

'Chinoy paid P15-M ransom for Ces'

Lawyer says this was apart from P5M paid by ABS-CBN and Drilon kin

By Alexis Pape

A CHINESE-FILIPINO BUSINESSMAN AND possibly his wife were the source of the P15 million in additional ransom paid to the kidnappers of an ABS-CBN news team led by Ces Oreña Drilon in Sulu, a lawyer for Jolo Mayor Alvarez Izquiz said yesterday.

Lawyer Firdausi Abbas confirmed the ransom payment to reporters in Camp Crame yesterday, while denying police claims that Izquiz and his son Hanley, who negotiated the release of the captives, had pocketed part of it.

The money allegedly given by the businessman was in addition to the P5 million earlier paid to the kidnappers, Abbas said. ABS-CBN came up with P3 million while P2 million was raised by the family of Drilon, he added. Police claim the Izquiz kept P5 million.

"If they (Philippine National Police) believe that, they should have recovered the money," Abbas said.

Police arrested Izquiz and his son right after Drilon, her cameraman Jimmy Encinas and Prof. Octavio Dinampo, their guide, were released. The Izquiz have been charged with complicity in the abduction.

Sen. Loren Legarda, who was involved in the negotiations for the release of Drilon, told the Kapihan sa Manila Bayd press forum yesterday that the family is "based so far(here)" that she believes took part of the ransom or were involved in the abduction.

In Sulu, hundreds of residents held two separate rallies in Indanan town and Jolo to show their support for Mayor Izquiz.

"The P15 million came from an anonymous donor, a Mister and Madame X," Abbas told reporters.

His statement contradicted the network's stance that no ransom would be paid for the release of Drilon, cameraman Jimmy Encinas and Angelo Valderama, and Dinampo, a professor at Mindanao State University.

Corporate denial

ABS-CBN corporate communication head Bong Osorio denied Abbas' statements. "ABS-CBN stands by its no-ransom policy. We are cooperating fully with police and we are confident a thorough and credible investigation will bear us out."

Abbas went to the police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group yesterday in his capacity as the Izquiz' new lawyer after their first lawyer, Emesto Francisco, withdrew his appearance at yesterday's preliminary investigation.

After the proceedings, Abbas was again asked by reporters on the payment of the P15 million.

"It was a Chinese gentleman who came up with the money. That is not a secret," Abbas said. Somebody else, he declined to identify the donor.

He added that it was Frank Oreña, Drilon's brother, who brought the ransom to Jolo. "The police can confirm this. He was the courier."

Pressed about the mysterious donor, Abbas again refused to reveal his identity, saying only that the donor "was has to hide."

An affidavit of Sup. Wenie Ondam, who went under cover and penetrated Isnilon group, confirmed that the P15 million was found in the Jolo-Indanan Municipal Hall under the supervision of Sulu Board Member Nancy Yunasi. The reporters were able to snap photos of the airplane, a commercial Sun aircraft, that supposedly brought the money in two duffel bags. The airplane were later released to the Izquiz.

The PNP filed with the Department of Justice last week complaints of kidnapping for ransom against 17 persons, including the Izquiz and Yunasa.

Convinced of innocence

Based on an initial meeting with the Izquiz, Abbas said he was "convinced they are not guilty. The affidavits of the PNP officers and witnesses do not state that they (Izquiz) were involved. There is no probable cause... They don't have a case."

He charged that the arrest of the Izquiz was politically motivated. "They are caught in a web of credit-grabbing and the scramble for media mileage... This government has long been a supporter of the US-led war on terror and its ear-mouse pitch."

The real kidnappers, he said, were still on the loose.

Meanwhile, in a short interview with reporters, Mayor Izquiz said he was "fine" but was still perplexed as to why charges had been filed against him.

'The bad guy'

"I am OK but I am still wondering why I am here. Revealing ngayon (Chatpet) and then I am here. Was I here I have saved and always saving treasures (I'm the bad guy)."

Sen. Loren Legarda said Drilon and her group were "thankful" we saved their lives and we hope they will save ours."

Among the circumstances in Sulu, Jose Iesal, daughter-in-law of the Indanan mayor, said she found it strange that the mayor who had Drilon said her crew in the kidnappers' lair. —Jamed Ilagan, Jam. con included in the PNP charge sheet. With reports from Alfiner M. Lopez and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **SWEDISH** family of 4 found slain in Cebu town /A7

Palace: Ces kidnapping on GMA, Bush agenda

By Michael Lim Ubac and Gil Cabacungan

THE ABDUCTION OF TV broadcaster Ces Oreña Drilon, her crew and a university professor will be part of the agenda during the one-on-one talk between President Macapagal Arroyo and US President George W. Bush scheduled today.

"The subject this time for urgent agenda of security and terrorism—it could even be the **perfect takeoff** for the two leaders' discussion of the Mindanao **situation**," said a Malacañang diplomatic source who tagged the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group as the kidnappers.

The Senate will also conduct an investigation of the kidnapping to review the government's enforcement of its no-ransom policy and to formulate guidelines for the entry and exit of high-profile personalities in **high-risk zones like Sulu.**

In Senate Resolution No. 454, Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon's committee on national defense and security will conduct the inquiry which may leave Sen. Loren Legarda, who played an active role in negotiating the release of Drilon and the others, as one of the witnesses.

The Palace said Ms Arroyo's 39-day US trip, which began Sunday, days after the Drilon abduction, "has put the spotlight" more on the mindless capacity of the Abu Sayyaf bandits and the work that remains to be done to end their murderous."

The US government has poured millions of dollars into anti-poverty programs in Mindanao based on the principle that foreign assistance is more effective when it reinforces sound political, economic and social development that promotes poverty reduction through economic growth, and the statement issued from Washington.

In an earlier interview, Press Secretary Jesus Dureza did not discount the possibility that the issue would be raised by either of the two presidents.

"If the kidnapping in Jolo is discussed, it could be part of the overall [security] situation in Mindanao," said Dureza, referring to the nine-day captivity of Drilon, her cameraman Angelo Valderama and Jimmy Encinas, and Mindanao professor Octavio Dinampo.

Malacañang also hinted that it would turn an iron hand...in pursuit of Mr Arroyo's directive to the police and military to "wipe out" the Abu Sayyaf.

"The kidnapping[s] forced authorities anew on the continuing danger posed by a handful of terrorists to peace and stability in Mindanao. It has inevitably raised some people's pessimism toward the Abu Sayyaf that could ultimately lead to more drastic action against the kidnap-for-ransom syndicate," the statement said.

For his part, Biazon focused on the role played by government officials in the negotiations for the release of Drilon and the others.

"Did any public official participate in the negotiations that ended with the payment of ransom? I don't think there is a denial that **ransom had been paid. What then** is the role played by government officials including Bankaud Mayor (Ahmad) Ismail and other public officials who came out saying **they had [been part of the negotia**tions?" Biazon said yesterday in a press conference.

Whether Legarda, who accompanied Drilon and her crew on their return trip to Manila via private jet, would be invited as a resource person, Biazon said this "would be subject to discussion depending on the leadership of the Senate because we have to know."

Legarda revealed that she had no knowledge of any ransom paid for the release of Drilon while maintaining that Izquiz played a key role in the safe release of the news crew.

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Where does 'pork' go? Public to get answers on House online site

By Christian V. Esguerra

FINALLY, THE PIG WILL BE LET OUT OF the poke (bag).

The House of Representatives is setting up a [illegible] program that will allow the public to reconcile the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) of congressmen which is more popularly known as the "pork barrel."

Two months from now, citizens will be able to see how each representative spends his or her P70 million allocation by browsing through the official House website (www.congress.gov.ph), according to secretary general Marilyn Yap.

"That's the intention, to ensure transparency in the disbursement of PDAF funds so the people will know where their money is going," said Majority Leader Arthur Defensor yesterday.

"The new system will minimize possible abuses in the utilization and disbursement of the PDAF," he told the reporters.

E-legislation

Yap said posting PDAF disbursements online was part of the lower house's drive toward "e-legislation." The program—more or less like Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) which is tasked with the Government Service Insurance System—is a battle for control of the power distributor.

Emerging from a three-hour hearing at the Court of Appeals yesterday, Marcelo was all smiles, exhibiting his comeback.

"I took on this case upon an insistent request that I do so," he said. "First, I studied the records for one week and I thought liberalization had merit, so I accepted."

Marcelo said he had wanted to take his time before taking on his client's request for the first time.

"This is my first court appearance since I resigned (as Ombudsman), two and a half years ago," he said laughing.

"I have never lost a major case since 1995 and I think this is a milestone. I studied this carefully," he added.

Asked if he [illegible] lawyering for Meralco, Marcelo explained that his law firm, Sillerio Cruz, Marcelo & Sagunday, had been counseling the Lopez group's ABS-CBN television network even before he joined the government.

Marcelo is a senior partner at what was originally called CVC Law but is more popularly known as "The Firm" for its ties to President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

He caught the public's attention during the impeachment proceedings against then President Joseph Estrada when he was chosen to handle the prosecution of the prosecution's star witness.

Before serving as Ombudsman from October 2002 to November 2005, Marcelo was appointed Solicitor General in 2001 to the ranks of the important prosecution.

Marcelo also led the legal panel that successfully prosecuted and secured the conviction of Estrada for plunder last year.

Stunning the board room struggle between the Lopez group and GMA entered what could be a protracted battle in a new front even as the Court of Appeals gave each party 15 days to submit memoranda before the court decides the case.

The Lopez group and GMA are locked in contention over the subscription of proxies in the run-up to PHILCO annual stockholders' meeting on June 27, where GMA president Mercedes Gotia had hoped to wrest control of the utility.

At yesterday's hearing, the CA ordered Meralco and the GMA to explain in writing how the concession on the solicitation clause had come about, why the GMA was not immediately given a copy of the Manila Issued's ruling on the challenge regarding proxies, and why the regular court had or did not have jurisdiction over the matter.

Lawyers from both sides reopened arguments of a quick resolution as the CA did not set another hearing.

At the stockholders' meeting, the GMA had questioned the process of validating proxies.

GMA chief legal counsel Estrella Elamparo told the court yesterday the Meralco management had violated securities regulations when it did not issue proxy forms and statements to stockholders on whose behalf the proxies were being assigned.

Meralco said it was not the management that solicited proxies but First Philippine Holdings Corp., which did so in compliance with the rules.

FPHC holds the Lopez group's 33.4-percent stake in Meralco and five board seats. The government in turn has four seats, two of which are held by GMA nominees, including Enrile.

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High Fiber is that's in

Gardenia

Ex-Ombudsman turns up in court as Meralco lawyer

By Roland N. Dorotan

HE'S BACK.

Former Ombudsman Simeon V. Marcelo has returned to court as a private lawyer representing no less than Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) which is locked with the Government Service Insurance System in a battle for control of the power distributor.

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'Frank' spoils GMA 10-day official trip to US

PRESIDENT Arroyo gets a warm welcome from Filipino-American professionals when she arrived at the Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno, California, on Sunday. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

From page A1

about Saturday's sinking of the ferry owned by Sulpicio Lines off Sibuyan Island in Romblon on the height of Typhoon "Frank."

Some 900 Filipino-Americans welcomed the 20-minute morning homecoming Ms Arroyo at the International Convention Center and Vice President Noli de Castro and NDCC chief Frank to Malacañang.

Ms Arroyo, who is on a 10-day official trip to the United States, ordered government rescue efforts for the missing, dig passengers. When a Coast Guard official reported that 20 survivors were found, she said: "Oh, praise God!"

Sulpicio Lines owner Ed Go, whom De Castro invited to join the meeting, reported a total of 962 people, including 724 passengers, on board the vessel. Ten bodies and four survivors have been found, Go said.

Press Secretary Jesse Robredo confirmed that the Philippine government was considering asking for US assistance in rescue and relief operations.

"Our disaster officials are in close touch with their American counterparts to determine the nature and extent of assistance that the US may provide. I have talked on the phone with Ambassador Kristie Kenney on this and she confirmed that our AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and disaster officials are adequately addressing the present needs," Davao told reporters.

Bills vs rice hoarding

In a series of directives, the President:

- Asked lawmakers in her delegation in the hills making rice hoarding and profiteering as a crime of economic sabotage, with dossier as aggravating circumstance, and imposing a maximum rice price during a state of calamity while giving a decent return for farmers and traders, as well as an forced sale of hoarded rice.
- Ordered government aid for the ferry victims and asked the congressmen to give assistance as well as victims who are their constituents.
- Directed the Department of Foreign Affairs to open disaster relief donation accounts in major US cities, Europe, the Middle East and Asia, and ordered the National Computer Center and the Philippine Information Agency to ensure that the NDCC website and text numbers work.
- Ordered that pending a review of Philippine Coast Guard protocols, no vessels would be allowed to sail if they would pass through possible typhoon paths. She ordered Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza to give aid all Sulpicio Lines ships.
- Assigned NDCC official Glen Rabonza to coordinate with Sulpicio Lines to get and release information about the ferry victims.

Compensation for victims

During the teleconference, Go said the company would compensate the victims. "Our company is committed to compensate the victims, bring them to the provinces and their hometowns and give their families whatever expenses. Our company will take care of all the expenses," he said.

In Manila, a Philippine Air Force (PAF) cargo plane took off three times yesterday to bring tons of relief goods, including food, clothing and blankets, and rescue motorboats to Iloilo City, area of the areas badly hit by Frank. Six UH-1H choppers from the Mactan Air Base were also sent to Roxas in Antique to relief operations.

The command established an operations center to control and supervise all relief and rescue relations building there Manila.

Five helicopters took off one after another from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. yesterday to help in search and rescue operations over the sinking ship off Sibuyan, Federico Ramirez Jr., the PAF's 505th Search and Rescue Group were among five teams skilled in the area.

Rice 'bombardment'

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap disclosed the National Food Authority to immediately shuttle its rice distributions to typhoon-hit areas, including Iloilo, Cebu and certain provinces in Bicol and Mindanao.

Because of its sufficient inventories coming from Vietnam rice harvests and rice imports, the NFA can engage in a "selective bombardment" of rice stocks anywhere at any given time, to stabilize prices and ensure a steady supply, Yap said.

Earlier, agriculture officials said initial palay harvests in the first half of the year had already exceeded the government target of 7.1 million tons.

Thousands of displaced families in Western Visayas are in need of kitchen utensils, water containers and candles, according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Flying to Iloilo yesterday to check on the plight of the victims, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral found that the families lacked candles, flashlights, batteries, blankets and mosquito nets. Other items listed by the victims were drinking water, gas, lamps and mats, she said.

Yesterday, the DSWD distributed P1 million worth of relief goods to families stranded in Metro Manila.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Social Action, Justice and Peace is preparing a relief package worth P500,000 for Iloilo.

The Department of Health said it shipped out P500,000 worth of medicines and supplies, including cost rehydration medicines and food packets to Western Visayas.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, who returned to the region yesterday, warned residents of communicable diseases in evacuation centers.

Sailing prohibition

While the NDCC officials were reporting to her, Ms Arroyo was hearing through some reports from her cousins. Then she told the Coast Guard official that his report to her the previous day that the ship had no prohibition here sailing through the storm was not true.

So she spoke in front of the crowd of mostly professional Filipino-Americans dressed in their Sunday best and having tagalog. Ms Arroyo spoke in tagalog and taglish (tagalog-English) during the hosted dining another teleconference upon her arrival in San Francisco when she demanded to know why the ship was allowed to sail despite the storm.

"You just looking at the guidelines ... if any vessel is scheduled to depart and the coverage of the vessel should sunday cautionary storm signal no. 1, 2, 3 and 4 within the danger areas until they would date close, outline. So it's not true what you said that there was no prohibition. It's in your guidelines," she told the Coast Guard official.

"And from furthermore, No. 3, no vessel shall sail except to take shelter if a public storm signal entering a isolated in the point of origin, the route, and the point of destination. So it's not true what you said yesterday that there are no absolute prohibitions. There are," she said.

Invitation, impatience

The President displayed early slight irritation and impatience when Rabonza gave a report on the relief operations when she was talking about the casualties and damage of the typhoon.

"We're still on the consolidated damage then reserve and relief and later the rest outline. Then let us look at the damage, we have to look for them (missing passengers), then when it subsides we start with relief and reconstruction, right? Let's share the report on the damage now," she said.

Rabonza reported 11 dead, 96 injured and 85 missing, but those did not include the ferry victims.

Philippine Consul General to San Francisco Marciano Paynor Jr. said the President's visit to Fresno was a sort of homecoming since her last visit in 1999 when she was the Vice President.

"Our kababayan in America form a dynamic human bridge that joins the Philippines and the United States, and that connects our past with our future. You have grown in numbers. You have attained the pinnacle of the professions. You are increasingly well-established, articulate and visible. You have become more involved in the ethnic cultural life that makes America such a truly remarkable country," Ms Arroyo told the audience.

Fil-Am help

"You have done so without losing your bonds of affection for your mother country or your inherent pride in your Filipino heritage. Every year, Filipino Americans extend all kinds of assistance for your old schools, home towns, provinces and local organizations. Even medical and dental missions, to educational and investment support, to humanitarian and charitable causes, Filipino-Americans are ever ready to help the land of your forebears."

"Now, there is a need again for your help. There is a typhoon in the Philippines and we are hoping everybody to help," she said in Filipino.

Ms Arroyo arrived late by about 30 minutes for the Mass and program at the International Convention Center from her first activity at the Community Regional Medical Center in the private hospital, she met with Filipino nurses, doctors and caregivers to thank them for their dedication.

Some 2,000 or 65 percent of the hospital nurses are Filipinos.

Ms Arroyo left Fresno after lunch for Washington where she would meet with US President George W. Bush, and if not presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama. With report by Jaime Enrico Quijano, Amy A. Remo, Jocelyn R. Uy and Kristine L. Alave in Manila

MAYNILAD IMPROVEMENT WORKS AT LA MESA TREATMENT PLANT 1 & 750MM VALVE REPLACEMENT AT SANTOL ST. CORNER R. MAGSAYSAY, MANILA

(June 23, 2008 schedule of La Mesa Treatment Plant work aborted due to typhoon Frank)

As part of its ongoing comprehensive Facilities improvement program, Mayniland will undertake the following activities which will result in a temporary water service interruption in the areas and on the dates indicated:

A. Replacement of Rapid Mixers and cleaning of the North and South Coagulated Water Chambers of La Mesa Treatment Plant One on June 24, July 1 and July 7, 2008. This will result in improved plant efficiency and reduced maintenance cost.

The following areas will have low water pressure to no water from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on the dates of the activity:

1. Mayniland Business Center
Barangays Obrero, San Jose, St. Peter, Makatipo, N.S. Amoranto, Paang Bundok, Salvacion, San Isidro, Labradon, San Francisco, Lourdes, Novaliches, Sauyo, Apolonio Samson, Baesa, Pag-ibig sa Nayon, Bahay Toro, Sta. Quiterio, Kaligayahan, San Antonio, Del Monte, Damayan, Mariblo, Pasong Putik, Nagkaisang Nayon

2. Quezon Business Center
Barangays Sangandaan (UHS Village, Pamilar Village, Bituin Court, Spring Village), Tandang Sora (Capitol Homesite, Royal Pavilion, Rainer Village, San Pregenia, South Fairview, and Village, Acoma Subd. Philcoast, Bahay Toro (Nueva Village, GHS Village, Congressional Subd., Town and Country), Barangay Salvacion Area Tandang Sora to J.P. Rizal's and Barangays 111 and 113 of Sta. Quiterio

3. Sampaloc Business Center
Barangays San Isidro, Sto. Nino, Santol and Damayang in Quezon City. Sta. Mesa area bounded by R. Magsaysay, PNR track and Pasig-San Juan River. Sampaloc area bounded by R. Magsaysay, Dapatan, Mahusay and Antipolo. Sta. Cruz area bounded by Aguinaldo, New Antipolo, Rizal Ave., Alejandrino and Tiguisa.

4. South Caloocan Business Center
Bdgs. Tondo (Barangays 129 to 141), San Rafael, Tondo, UM Compound Heroes del 96, Samson Road PNR, Blumo del 96, Portion of East Grace Park, Tagaytay Area, Malhacañang, C. Nunez Area, Arenas Area

5. Mabalacat/Subic Business Center
Bagong Barrio, Calaguiman, Barangays Dapdap, Sapalibutad, Barangay Sabang, Mancatian, Sta. ang, Malabanias, Barangays Tarlac, Tarlac, San Roque, Bamban, Bagumbayan, Dapdap West and East, Sapa, Dimasalang, Bacolor.

Production output of the La Mesa Treatment Plant One and Two will be increased prior to the 11 a.m. / p.m. work on June 24 and July 1 & 7 to compensate for the expected reduced water supply during the activity. This will serve to lessen the effects in most of the listed affected areas. However, residents are advised to store water prior to the project dates.

B. Replacement of a defective 750-mm gate valve along Santol St. near corner Ramon Magsaysay Blvd., Sampaloc, Manila from 9:00 p.m. to Friday, June 27, 2008, until 7 p.m., Saturday, June 28, 2008. This will result in better pressure and flow in the areas of influence.

The following areas will have no water:

Manila: Blocks of Bacood, area bounded by Aleta Extension, Pasig River, San Juan River and R. Magsaysay Blvd. area bounded by Ramon St. R. Magsaysay Blvd., Antipolo St., Segis R. Lyceo St., Pedro Gil St., Vicente Cruz and Josefina St.

Quezon City: Whole of Brgy. De La Salle, Brgy. Ma. Nieves Brgy. Isidro, and Brgy. Santol

Areas to have low pressure to no water are portions of Brgy. Don Manuel bounded by Cordillera, Ramon, Scarlet and E. Rodriguez Sts., Quezon City

Residents in the affected areas are advised to store water prior to the duration of the water service interruption. Thank you for bearing with us.

For more information, please call the Mayniland Hotline 1626

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Scam charges a mistake, says rights lawyer

CORPORATE SECRETARY MARIE TANJEN... co should not have been included among those recommended for prosecution by the National Bureau of Investigation in connection with an alleged P500-million pyramiding scam that victimized a number of individuals, including media personality Korina Sanchez, Fermin's lawyer said yesterday.

Human rights lawyer Romeo Capulong said his client Fermina incorporated Dewet Construction Trading Corp. (Dewetgroup) in 2003 on the request of its organizers, but had nothing to do with either its operations or the scam allegedly perpetrated by some of its officers.

Fermina is listed as the corporate secretary of Dewetgroup, which is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a company trading in luck and energy resources.

"Lawyers are often asked to help incorporate companies, and it's common for them to be nominal directors and even corporate secretaries of the companies they help incorporate, said Capulong, president of the human rights lawyers' group, Public Interest Law Center (PILC).

"In this particular case, my former PILC paralegal Marie Fermino was listed as the corporate secretary of Dewetgroup because she had incorporated it as part of her normal responsibilities as a lawyer," he said.

Capulong said some of the complainants in the case even mentioned Fermino as being involved in the fraud or criminal scam allegedly perpetrated by Dewetgroup's officers.

"The NBI mentions only some of the incorporators and officers of Dewetgroup as allegedly involved, as specified by the complainants," Capulong said.

A Bicol tobacco office high shot-term returns to entice investors. The high returns initially paid require ever-increasing number of investors to keep the scheme going. Eventually, however, the system eventually collapses.

The NBI had earlier recommended the prosecution of 24 incorporators and officers of Dewetgroup, including Worcester.

The NBI specifically mentioned one couple in the corporation as the ones who ordered their friends and acquaintances to invest in Dewetgroup with the promise of a guaranteed net profit of between six and eight percent monthly or about 7% percent to 96 percent per annum interest, with the option to pull out of the investment.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, June 24, 2008
Birth of John the Baptist

1st Reading: Is 49:1-6
2nd Reading: Acts 13:22-26
Gospel: Lk 1:57-66, 80

When the time came for Elizabeth, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the merciful Lord had done a wonderful thing for her and they rejoiced with her.

When it was the eighth day they came to circumcise the circumcision of the child, they wanted to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." They said to her, "No one in your family has that name". and they asked the father by means of signs for the name he wished to give. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet and wrote on it, "His name is John," and they were very surprised. Immediately Zechariah's mouth and tongue were freed and he spoke and blessed God.

A holy fear came on all in the neighborhood, and throughout the hills of Judea the people talked about these events. All who heard of it pondered it in their minds and wondered, "What will this child be?" For they understood that the hand of the Lord was with him.

As the child grew up, he was sent to be among the elders, he lived in the desert till the day when he appeared openly to Israel.

Commentary

John the Baptist figures prominently in the Gospels, for his holiness and call to radical conversion of heart prepared the way for the mission of Jesus. John's feast day is celebrated today, for he was sent by God to testify to the light. He was not the light, but here witness to it, so that countless souls might be saved. His untimely, his own death at the hand of Herod would prefigure the Lord being condemned to death by Pontius Pilate.

The night falls in the procession of St. John the Baptist, may we draw closer to the Lord Jesus, and may we embrace the call to radical conversion of heart.

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57 ship survivors so far; hundreds still missing

Front page A1

from the ferry.

Lizbo, a resident of Montalban, Quezon City, was interviewed yesterday by the Inquirer at the Quezon Medical Center in Lucena City, where she underwent a medical checkup.

The 23,000-ton ferry MV Princess of the Stars, owned by Sulpicio Lines, sailed from Manila on Friday on a 22-hour trip to Cebu City. The ferry capsized off Sibuyan Island in the central province of Romblon on Saturday evening.

Lizbo recalled that her close ex-boyfriend Jay announcements to abandon the ship, she already sensed that something was wrong.

"The ship was tilted and no longer returning to its normal floating position. I sensed that something was wrong. It was now different," she said nearly in tears as she recalled the last painful moments aboard the ferry.

Then she heard a voice from the public address system: "Hindemeron, tanodmon, please proceed to the bridge!"

Shortly thereafter, Lizbo said, she heard a commotion and shouting of passengers from all over the ship.

"There was no announcement yet on whether the ship had not were already harassed to go ravaging to the exit to assure our safety, wearing our life jackets," she said.

'I never lost hope'

When the call to abandon ship was finally given at about noontime Saturday, she said her cousin Edilina Dela Peña jump first but her back hit the steel railings.

Afraid that the weight also suffer the same fate, Lizbo said she waited for the water to reach her level before she made the jump and joined other survivors aboard life rafts.

"I don't know where my cousin is. I pray that she's also safe somewhere," she said.

Earlier, Susan's mother, Rosemen, arrived at the Quezon police headquarters with her kin.

She said Susan was with Edilina who had just arrived from Saipan on their way to Antique and just wanted to drop by Cebu to visit Edilina's brother," she said.

"When I heard the news over the radio that my daughter was among the survivors in Quezon, I knelt in deep prayer and thanked the Lord. I never lost hope that she's safe and alive," she said.

'We prayed to all saints'

For Orlaco Nuñez of Cebu, the harrowing experience was a testament of God's miraculous way.

"We prayed to all saints in heaven," he said as his wife Cathy hugged him in tight embrace, crying in joy.

Nuñez said he and the others were not rescued by fishermen or anybody else.

"The wind miraculously carried our life raft to the coastline," he said.

Unfortunately as they were nearing the shore, Nuñez said the lifeboat overturned and threw them all in the water.

"One of the male survivors removed his life jacket, apparently with the intention to swim to the shore. But unfortunately he did not make it and drowned," he said.

One of their companions aboard the life raft were missing after the incident.

The body of the still unidentified casualty was left in Mulanay, according to Nuñez.

He said he did not know what happened to the ship.

"There was nothing wrong with the ship. The engine was still running. But it was really being battered by strong winds and rains," Nuñez said.

Estanislao Feria Jr., the ship steward, said the ferry did not hit anything solid or run aground.

"The wind was so strong and water was already seeping in the left side, causing the ship to tilt," he said. "When I heard the abandon the ship call, I put on on my life jacket and prepared. Je nearest the exit for the safety of the passengers," he said.

For brothers Emperio and Jonathan Penaso, the harrowing ordeal strengthened their bond.

"I thought I already lost my brother when we both jumped out of the ship. Thank God, he's also alive and safe," Emperio said, looking at his brother Jonathan nearby.

Emperio said that when he safely made it to the life raft, he immediately scanned the area searching for his brother only to find him clinging to one side of the raft. "I immediately grabbed his arm and pulled him to the raft," he recalled.

The groups of survivors arrived at the Quezon Medical Center in a convoy of six vans escorted by a police patrol vehicle from Mulanay town at about 3 p.m.

Life vests saved 4

Four other survivors were hoisted by a helicopter bearing the presidential seal at Villanueva Air Base at 6:38 p.m. yesterday, bearing fresh memories of their ordeal.

The Philippine Air Force Search and Rescue Group flew the survivors to Manila from accompanied around from Sibuyan Island, where they had separately traveled land after hours of dinging to their life vests.

Jessa Gea Bernal, five hours of uncertainty in chilly waters as he prayed for the tide to sweep him ashore. He finally did at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, more than five hours since jumping off the Superferry 14 to seek.

"There were many of us floating, there were many people outside and I saw that many people panicked, some were the elderly ... I did not see my companions anymore. When I got out, the wind was really strong," said Gea, a driver who was traveling to Cebu with their co-workers when the ferry first happened.

He relied on his life vest to reach land, sailed onto the shore, then held on to a rock so he would not be swept away again. Fishermen found him shortly after.

Many trapped inside

Jessie Dion, 24, said he believed many others were trapped inside the ship when it quickly sank around noon Saturday.

"They're dead. There were many trapped inside, they were afraid to get out because the winds and waves were too strong," Dion said in reporters.

He said he never let go of his life vest as he paddled his way to shore.

Glen and Jhon, with former Lucena, 33, and Oliver Amorio, 31, were brought to the PNP General Hospital inside the air base for a checkup.

Capt. Leah Santiago, an Army spokesperson, said five people were picked up by fishermen off Bodias in Sibuyan Island and another floated ashore on Boracay after surviving two days in stormy seas.

Nelson Tandoan reached land at Agdahan village on Sibuyan Island, battered and bruised by his ordeal, Santiago said. "He said only he was only six people who jumped overboard as the ferry capsized. But he was the only one to have survived," she said.

"Nelan estimated there were more than 100 others jumping from the order sides. They were life vests, he said but he has no idea what happened to them," Santiago said. With a report from AFP

CRUCIAL Melissa, 35, of Cebu City, is hugged by his wife, Rachy, upon arrival at the Quezon Medical Center in Lucena City for medical checkup. MARLON RAMOS

Following is a list of survivors taken from the official website of Sulpicio Lines, Inc. (www.sulpiciolines.com):

Antonio Cesario	Ray Pagsisi
Carlo Jason Asuelo	Reynaldo Limotan
Celso Nuñez	Reynante Arillos
Danilo Deplomas	Richie Tayagtagan
Eduardo Tara Jr.	Rodel Labrete
Emperio Penaso	Ronnie Relativo
Fausto Cullo	Ruel Libet
Francisco Batula	Rupert a Tan
Gerry Palmero	Susan Lizbo
Jessie Bard	Uriel Lagahan
Jessie Gea	Vincent Reyson
Jonathan Penaso	Wesley Barsan
Jose Mario Garbo	Of the 32 names in the list, only
Minerva Torremocha	28 are included in the lists provided
Nilo Reyes	by the Philippine Coast Guard, National Disaster Coordinating Council
Nilito Lauro	and the Philippine National Police in
Oliver L. Amorio	Quezon province. Some of the
Phil Uding	names are spelled differently.
Philip Tampos	Inquirer Research
Ralph Alvin Dela Peña	

CHRONOLOGY

Deadliest ferry disasters in the Philippines

HERE IS A LIST OF SOME OF the deadliest shipping disasters in the archipelago over the past two decades:

- **December 1987**—A total of 4,386 die in world's worst peacetime shipping disaster, as ferry Doña Paz, owned by Sulpicio Lines, and an oil tanker collide off Mindoro Island.
- **October 1988**—Doña Marilyn, sister ship of Doña Paz, sinks off Leyte province, killing at least 308.
- **July 1991**—259 pilgrims drown when an overloaded wooden temple, steamed on three boats, collapses during a religious festival as it is being towed along the Bocaue River, in Bulacan province.
- **December 1994**—Ferry Cebu City collides with Singapore oil tanker, killing more than 140.
- **September 1996**—About 200 die when ferry MV Princess of the Orient, sister ship of Doña Paz and Doña Marilyn, sinks in stormy seas near Corón Island, Palawan province.
- **April 2000**—At least 118 drown after the M. Annahada sinks off Jolo Island.
- **February 2004**—Superferry 14 catches fire near Manila Bay, killing 116 people. Abu Sayyaf claims responsibility, saying a suicide bomber sabotaged the boat to protest ill treatment of Muslim communities.
- **June 2008**—MV Princess of the Stars sinks 5 km from Sibuyan Island in Romblon in typhoon-battered seas, leaving around 800 people missing.

Reuters

No sign of life: Divers ordered to bore hole in hull

Front page A1

capsized off the coast of Sibuyan Island at the height of Typhoon "Frank," which packed gusty winds of up to 195 kilometers per hour on Saturday afternoon.

"We just approached the hull of the ship, we got here and then began knocking on the hull so that we can get a sense if ever there are still people inside," Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Edgard Arevalo said. "Unfortunately there was no response."

The PCG raised the number of people aboard the 23-deck ferry from 747 to 862, including 113 crewmen and but no manifest, after its owner, Sulpicio Lines Inc., submitted an updated manifest. Around 50 of the people aboard were infants and children.

The 23,000-ton MV Princess of the Stars, with a capacity of 1,992 passengers, left Manila on Friday bound for Cebu City in spite of a raging typhoon. The PCG said regulations allowed ships with such tonnage to depart under this condition.

Sixteen hours after it left on what was a scheduled 22-hour voyage, the ferry sent a distress message, saying it was experiencing engine trouble off Sibuyan, Romblon, the PCG said. The ship later was engulfed by mountainous waves and sank with only its superstructure above the water.

Casualty reports

The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) reported 37 survivors had been picked up and 26 others had died in the shipwreck.

One of the dead was recovered along with the 26 survivors who were rescued off Mulanay town in Quezon province yesterday morning, said PCG's Commodore Luis Tuason Jr. The survivors had clung to the ropes of a raft.

Another 25 survivors were rescued on Burias Island off Masbate, the NDCC said. It said 11 of the dead were found aboard Burias.

PCG frigate arrived at the Sibuyan area 13 hours after Princess of the Stars sank on Saturday but did not get any response from anyone possibly trapped inside. PCG Capt. Gilbert Ramos told the Inquirer.

No sign of life

Navy spokesperson Arevalo said that the Navy's patrol gunboat (PG) 304 arrived in the area at around 3:30 p.m. on Sunday.

"It secured the area, monitored the drift, and launched on the hull of the Princess but no signs of life," Arevalo said in a text message.

Arevalo said that as of noon yesterday, four Navy vessels and an aircraft were strategically located in area moving toward Sibuyan Island. The Navy Islander 328 was on verify reports of passengers were floating at sea.

Two of the Navy boats have slowed down because of the perilous weather conditions, Arevalo said. However, the 46-meter BRP Capones, a larger ship with medical teams, divers, inflatable boats and rubber bags, was four hours away from the ferry.

"The Navy is not taking its operations given this situation whose time is of the essence. Lives are at stake and the Navy is continuing in its mission," Arevalo said.

Rescue teams battled furious seas and high winds yesterday in a dogged search for more survivors.

Bodies float after 3 days

"We have already down to most for floating bodies," Lt. Cmdr. Simeon'to Ramos told reporters aboard the Navy's BRP Pampanga, Agence France-Presse reported.

"After three days, they tend to float," Ramos said.

One survivor, crew member Rosario Lacuesta, earlier said people started jumping into the stormy sea after order were issued to abandon ship.

He said many children were trapped inside the vessel. "I could hear them wailing before the boat sank." With reports from Delfin Mallari Jr., Ephraim Aguilar and Aymee Gatoil, Inquirer Southern Luzon; AP, AFP, Reuters

US sends rescue craft to help look for survivors

THE USNS Stockton Navy ship has been sent by the United States from its military command in Hawaii to assist Philippine authorities in search and rescue efforts to locate passengers of MV Princess of the Stars in the worst sea tragedy yet this year.

THE UNITED STATES YESTERDAY dispatched a navy ship and surveillance aircraft from its military command in Hawaii to assist Philippine authorities in scouring the waters off Romblon for possible survivors from the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars in the worst sea tragedy yet this year.

The USNS Stockton and a P-3 reconnaissance aircraft were sent to the Philippines to assist in search and rescue efforts to locate the ship passengers, according to the US Embassy.

"The United States extends its sympathy to all who have been affected by Typhoon Frank (Fengshen) and its aftermath in the Republic of the Philippines. We deeply regret the loss of life, both on land and from the sinking of the ferry," it said in a statement released yesterday.

Offering assistance for search and rescue efforts off Romblon, the embassy said the Stockton, a "maritime prepositioning ship" that carries supplies and equipment for the US Marine Corps, was to meet Philippine rescuers late Monday.

As part of the US military's search command, it will carry helicopters expected to join aerial search and rescue efforts off Sibuyan Island. "We anticipate that the helicopters will be in position to begin operations later today," the embassy said.

The Stockton last docked in the Philippines in December 2004 to help rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts in typhoon-struck areas in Luzon, including Aurora and Nueva Ecija.

Pacom's surveillance aircraft was set to touch down at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga yesterday.

The US Agency for International Development will also provide $148,000 (P44 million) worth of relief goods to the Philippine National Red Cross "for immediate distribution in the most severely affected areas."

Tarra Quismundo

OUTSTANDING YOUTH Chiang Kai Shek College graduate Paul John G. Kao (center) receives this year's Pantaleong Bernal sa Mag-iing Kabataan (MAKA) awards from Department of Education (NCR) executive director Nanie Bebadilla, National Commission for Culture and the Arts chair Cecilia Bautista Alvarez, Education Undersecretary Dr. Vilma Labrador and Chiang Kai Shek student affairs dean Jocelyn Ng during the recent Independence Day celebration at the Luneta. Han won this last year's Outstanding Boy Scout.

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PILOT

Swedish family killed in Cebu

SUSPECTED BOLO-toter killed a Swedish couple and their two young children in a Cebu town before setting their house on fire, police and Swedish Embassy officials said Monday.

Police found the charred remains of Kit Mellin Hjalmer, 68, his wife Maria Inemia Viluran, 35, and their 5-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son in the two-story house in Sibonga town in central Cebu province late Saturday.

Senior Insp. Neil Patricio Cortes said police believe four to five robbers broke in, robbed the family, then set fire to the house, which is about 270 meters from the nearest neighbor in the mountainous town.

Cash box

Police found an open cash box, Cortes said. He said family employees were under investigation and had told police the Viluranes had sent them home Saturday afternoon.

Swedish Embassy officer Fredrik Egerhem confirmed the victims' identities and that all four victims were Swedish nationals. The father's hometown was not immediately known.

Struggle

Police officer Eurocito Sanchez said initial investigation indicated Hjalmer had struggled with the suspects in the garage, where police found a broken couch, blood stains, slippers and eyeglasses on the floor near his body.

His wife's body was found on the ground floor, while the children were in their room in the second story.

Sanchez said Hjalmer and his wife, who was from Cebu province, ran a bed business.

AP

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Gov't grounds Sulpicio ships; inquiries set

SULPICIO Lines first vice president Edgar Go (above) listens during a news conference in Manila on Monday. At right, a portion of the hull of the capsized MV Princess of the Stars juts out of the water after it sank in typhoon-tossed waters off Sibuyan Island. Rescuers are looking into having a hole in the hull of the capsized ferry in a desperate attempt to find survivors amid fears that more than 800 passengers and crew may have died.

in major way to accidents.

The Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) also formed a Board of Marine Inquiry (BMI). The agencies investigators said they would want answered was why the MV Princess of the Stars—which capsized off Sibuyan Island on Saturday with more than 800 people aboard—took the route that, as it turned out, placed it in the path of a typhoon.

A Sulpicio official said the shipping firm would cooperate with the government probe.

Boni Ador, Benjamin Madrigal's chief of the inquiry board, said the BMI would, among others, try to find out why the Princess of the Stars took the route that it did.

"We are going to try to find out why the master decided to use this route, whether he was aware the typhoon was in their vicinity or approaching this direction," Ador told reporters, adding that as far as he knew, there was no part of refuge in Sibuyan.

Owner's call

Ador said he thought the ship captain should have gone somewhere where it would find shelter when the weather worsened.

"The master should have gone to another port," he said.

He noted that the Princess of the Stars did not seek cover which he said was what two Sulpicio ships—islands had left Manila at the same time as the Sulpicio ship—did.

Ador also found from Negros Occidental that was likewise scheduled to leave on Friday, decided to postpone its trip, Manila said.

"It's the judgment call of the owner," he observed.

The DOTC also set up teams that would look into whether the owners gotten around the rules and provide assistance in the victims of Friday's disaster, and their families.

A review committee will look at the guidelines for deploying vessels during stormy weather and a Task Force Princess Star will focus on providing relief and assisting in search and rescue operations.

The tragedy that struck the Princess of the Stars was the fourth to hit a Sulpicio ship in 22 years.

Warn in peacetime

The most occurred in December 1987 when Sulpicio's MV Doña Paz and the oil tanker MT Vector collided near Mindoro. More than 4,000 people died in what has been described as the world's worst peacetime sea tragedy.

In a press conference, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said the Marinas suspended the Sulpicio vessels so it could inspect their seaworthiness and assess their compliance with maritime rules and regulations before they are allowed to sail again.

Mendoza said the passengers who had already bought tickets on Sulpicio vessels would be transferred to ships of other companies.

Gov't control

He also said there was a need to take a second look at guidelines on deployment of vessels during stormy weather.

The review committee will be composed of maritime officials and shipowners.

"What we will talk about is government control and supervision," Mendoza said.

"The international maritime groups have on hand and that rules about this. In other countries, it's always the call of the captain, but the Philippines is in a peculiar situation because it recognizes many islands."

Mendoza said the government alone could not decide on this and there had to be collaboration with the maritime industry. (A)

The BMI, headed by Rear Adm. Ramon Liwag, will look into the events that led to the capsizing of the ship.

Hearings this week

Liwag said he expected the board to come out with its findings and recommendations in 15 to 30 days. Its hearings are expected to start this week.

Speaking to reporters just before the DOTC announced the creation of an inquiry board, Sulpicio vice president for passenger affairs Sally Bueser said the firm had not received any suspension order but added: "We will not operate with the government."

Marina administrator Al. cente Isaac Jr. said reports that his office had revoked the suspension order and that, initially, it would not include passenger vessels "as that the existing load can be delivered."

"Mayroong ibang sasakyan," he said.

Bueser said the decision was "unfortunate" based on the details of the ship's departure and the warnings made by Pag-asa.

In a presentation to media, Bueser noted that the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)—which gave the Sulpicio vessel the green light to set sail at 8 p.m. on June 20 when the storm signal in Metro Manila was still at No. 1—should have known as early as 5 a.m. of June 20 that the typhoon was already veering off the original track forecast by Pag-asa.

Bueser also took to task the PCG for having most of its fleet in Metro Manila when it already knew that a big storm was coming, and that its fleet should have been dispersed to areas projected to be the storm's path.

Bueser reckoned that the Princess of the Stars was still off the coast of Calatagan, Batangas, when the storm signal was raised to No. 3 and claimed the captain had plenty of time to go back to port for shelter.

"We need to look into the log books and preserve them," Bueser said.

Medina, which was responsible for checking the seaworthiness of vessels, could also be liable, Bueser said.

Sen. Mar Roxas said: "This time, let us go beyond mere rhetoric and really get to the bottom of what exactly what went wrong, and who are liable for this tragic incident, so that it will never happen again."

Negrales 'Strike 3'

Speaker Prospero Nograles said it appeared that Sulpicio Lines had never learned from its past three accidents.

In a statement, Nograles hinted on the possible revocation of Sulpicio's franchise.

"It's really unthinkable that after all these years we have not learned a lesson from the Doña Paz tragedy. Strike three, even in baseball or softball means you're out," Nograles said.

Bello Rep. Pedpedal Rivera, chair of the House committee on legislative franchises, said that the company faced a serious crisis of its franchise if it was found to have violated conditions of its privileges.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Anthony Culeo refused to comment when asked if the sinking of four passenger vessels in the last two decades was enough ground to revoke the license of Sulpicio.

In a statement, Malacañang said the BMI would conduct a "thorough probe of the Princess of the Stars sinking and the reported 200,000 litres of oil in the sunken ship. Our sympathies go out to the families of those who perished in the tragedy."

With reports from GMA-7 Cabinet reporter Jo Newman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac

Gov't, courts accused of going soft on ship firm

Viewpoint A1

owned huge enough damages to make Dalpidos Lines] bankrupt," lawyer Harry Roque said in a telephone interview.

"The pattern is the government's failure to prosecute and discipline [Sulpicio Lines] ... The government just leaves the victims on their own," Lawyer Joel Butuyan said in a separate interview.

Roque and Butuyan handled cases involving families of victims of the Dec. 20, 1987, sinking of the MV Doña Paz, which is considered the world's worst peacetime sea tragedy. The Sulpicio Lines ferry collided with the oil tanker, MT Vector, at the Tablas Strait, leaving more than 4,000 people dead.

Twelve years after the maritime disaster, the Supreme Court found Sulpicio Lines liable for overloading the ferry. The Doña Paz carried 4,000 passengers, but only 1,493 were listed on the manifest.

The high court ordered Sulpicio Lines to pay the family of each victim—47-year-old public school teacher Sebastian Cabasal and his 11-year-old daughter Grazon—a total of P1.2 million representing moral and exemplary damages, attorney's fees, and loss of future earnings of beneficiaries.

The latest court ruling involving the Doña Paz was handed down in September 1996—19 years after the accident. The Court of Appeals found Sulpicio Lines liable but only for breach of contract and ordered the shipping line to pay P14.9 million to the family of geodetic engineer Mariano Lorenzo Jr., who died in the maritime disaster.

Lucky few

The Lorenzos and the Cabasals were among the lucky few who were awarded more than a million pesos in damages by the courts. The families of the other victims opted for loans sums in out-of-court settlements.

"I remember we were the ones that our clients eventually settled," Butuyan said in a separate interview.

Both Butuyan and Roque couldn't remember the exact figure but said amount of damages awarded by the court was rather small.

He said Sulpicio Lines managed to settle with the victims' heirs opposing the decision of the lower court. "The settlement amount was even small," Roque said.

Butuyan said he didn't blame the families for opting for a loan or out-of-court settlement because of the long delay and the high cost of litigation. "They really need the money" he said.

Still, Butuyan said the government should hold Sulpicio Lines criminally liable accountable for the accident.

"The government may still proceed with the criminal case ... You can't settle the criminal aspect," Butuyan said.

More accidents

A year after the Doña Paz sank, another Sulpicio Lines vessel—the MV Doña Marilyn—capsized, leaving 250 people dead. Anchorettes allowed the Doña Marilyn to sail from Manila to Tacloban City at the height of Typhoon "Undang."

Again, Sulpicio Lines was not held responsible by the maritime disaster. "It was an act of God," the board of Marine Inquiry concluded.

In 1998, the largest Sulpicio Lines ship—the MV Princess of the Orient—sank at the height of Typhoon "Gading." At least 150 were swallowed dead.

Two years later, Sulpicio Lines was again absolved of any criminal liability by the Department of Justice.

The three maritime disasters were but a prelude to the recent sinking of the ill-starred MV Princess of the Stars of Sulpicio Lines. Report by Inquirer Researchers Jenel Ellan Rivera, Inquirer Research

Ill-starred ship pride of Sulpicio

Viewpoint A1

Sulpicio officials said.

If the vessel sank, it was because of someone's carelessness, Sally Bueser, Sulpicio Lines vice president, said in a news conference in Manila yesterday.

Bueser accused that the 23,600-ton ship, which carried 751 passengers—716 paying passengers and 27 commodores, accommodations and six stowaways—and 111 crew, left Pier 12 at Manila North Harbor "in very good condition."

"The Princess of the Stars, the largest ship in Sulpicio's fleet and in the domestic trade, was very seaworthy," Bueser said, answering the query carried out the ship obtained from maritime authorities.

"We are wondering why there are reports that the ship sank because of engine problem," Bueser said.

According to Sulpicio officials, the ship left the harbor past on Friday with a go-signal from the Philippine Coast Guard.

Bueser pointed out that the ship's size allowed it to sail even under Storm Signal No. 1 according to maritime rules.

"The crew of Princess of the Stars kept on communicating with us until 11 a.m. on Saturday," Bueser said. At that point, ship master Capt. Florencio Matienzo informed the Sulpicio management that the vessel had run aground and eventually tilted on its left side.

Bueser said the company sent a message to Matienzo and the other crew members through their cell phones, but to no avail.

"We are also at a loss as to what really happened. We are as angry as you are to know about the real story behind the tragedy," Bueser said.

No mechanical problems

Edgar Go, Sulpicio Lines first vice president, also said the ship had not experienced any mechanical trouble before it sank.

Go explained that the report of the chief mate that the vessel was actually the lone [illegible]—which sank the vessel—[illegible] sailing [illegible] Sunday, saying that the ferry had cleared three fronts of engine trouble.

Go explained that the report of the chief mate that the vessel was actually the lone [illegible]—which sank the vessel—[illegible] sailing [illegible] Sunday, saying that the ferry had cleared three fronts of engine trouble.

IN THE KNOW

Sulpicio Lines

SULPICIO [SUL-PIS-IK] NAME

Founded in 1973 by Go Bunsu Sin [also popularly known as Sulpicio Go], a Chinese merchant who came to the Philippines in 1948, and his sons.

The Cebu City-based shipping conglomerate started out with a \$1,000 loan from MTI vessels, also highest and the barges. Know has grown into a range of more than 114,000 and has over 2,000 employees. Its operations have branched out to nine Philippine cities.

According to the latest documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Sulpicio Lines is run by Go's second- and third-generation descendants: Emelano Go is president and board chair; Eduardo Go, executive vice president; Carlos Go, executive vice president and chief executive officer; Victoriano Go, senior vice president and secretary; Constantino Go, first vice president; Ricardo Go, first vice president and treasurer; and Edward Go, first vice president.

Other stockholders include Arturo Go, Edgar Go, Edmund Go, Jordan Go, Jonathan Go, Jerome Go, Harold Go, Gerald Go and Gilbert Go. Inquirer Research

in maneuvering, docking and anchoring. He also said that Matienzo, who remained training, had the overall authority to decide whether to continue the voyage or turn back.

"The strong winds and big waves rocked the ship one way and rolled from its original course and swept it in shallow waters," Go said.

The Sulpicio officials announced that they would pay P200,000 to the family of each casualty and give financial assistance to the survivors and their relatives.

Hoping against hope

"We are hoping against hope that most survivors will be retrieved," Bueser said, adding that of the 724 paying passengers, 81 were minors.

Go said that Sulpicio Lines purchased the ship in Japan five years ago for $5 million.

Dimensions: exclusive of the 845-plus people on board the vessel complained to Sulpicio employees 'while waiting for news in the control room of Cebu, where the Princess of the Stars was meant to dock.

"You can't bring my loved ones back. You should be held responsible," one woman told employees of the company.

A floor of the passenger terminal was converted into a small chapel with a makeshift altar. Priests and priests comforted those wanting. Resting on stretched Catholic Bible, one rose presided the wall in grief over his missing son.

Edward Go, one of Sulpicio's owners, said the company was relying on the Coast Guard for information.

A tragedy nobody wanted

"We fully understand the feelings of the people and we are prepared to help them in any way we can, but, as of now there is really no information available," he said. "This is a tragedy that nobody wanted."

Scores of angry relatives also confronted Sulpicio officials in their port office in Cebu City.

"Sulpicio is only thinking of its millions," shouted Teresa Rijan, whose parents—Regalio Alipio, 61, and his wife Nena, 56—had gone to Manila to attend the funeral of a daughter. With a report from Rimon Magallanes, Inquirer Visayas

'Joey' backs Senate testimony at Ombudsman

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DE VENECIA III

BUSINESSWORLD: Joey' De Venecia III is definitely not backing off.

The son of former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday appeared in the Office of the Ombudsman to affirm the details of the testimony he gave in the Senate investigation of alleged irregularities in the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal with ZTE Corp. of China.

"I have already said what I have to say before the Senate and I am happy that we are already here [at the Ombudsman] and I am here to tell the truth," the younger De Venecia said.

De Venecia, head of a firm that failed to get the NBN-ZTE contract, had claimed that former Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chairman Abalos Sr. had offered him $30 million to withdraw his business proposal, while the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, on another occasion, had warmly endorsed him to "back off" from the deal.

De Venecia was the second of four witnesses summoned early this month by the Ombudsman to affirm their statements made on the NBN-ZTE deal.

Dante Madrigal, at one time a consultant for ZTE, made similar allegations and was the first to affirm his testimony on June 5. Former government forestry official Rodolfo Lozada Jr. and newspaper columnist Jarius Bondoc have yet to appear at the ombudsman's agency.

The NBN-ZTE contract has since been cancelled by President Macapagal-Arroyo. The Ombudsman is tasked with determining probable cause for the filing of charges against the officials linked to the anomaly tainted by hefty kickbacks.

The Ombudsman summoned to the four witnesses was in response to a complaint filed by Lawyer Brenton Fernandez Jr., one of seven complaints filed with the antigraft agency in connection with the NBN-ZTE deal.

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OPINION

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Another sea tragedy

EDITORIAL

IT HAS HAPPENED AGAIN. A SHIP WAS GIVEN clearance to sail despite a warning that a typhoon would hit the general area where it would pass through within 24 hours. Waves "as tall as mountains" lashed the ship, MV Princess of the Stars, and sank it off Sibuyan Island in Romblon. About 800 of the more than 862 persons aboard the ship were missing as of Sunday and were believed to have drowned.

If all the 800 missing passengers are finally declared dead, the sinking of the MV Princess of the Stars would go into the records as the second worst sea disaster in the Philippines. The country's—and the world's—worst peacetime sea disaster was the collision of the MV Doña Paz with MT Vector in Tablas Strait between Mindoro and Marinduque on Dec. 20, 1987 in which more than 4,000 people died.

One question being asked is why MV Princess of the Stars was allowed to sail despite the warning that Typhoon Frank would hit the general area where it would pass on its way to Cebu City. President Macapagal-Arroyo asked Vice Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo, Coast Guard chief, this question and he said that ships the size of the ill-fated vessel were not covered by storm warnings issued by the weather bureau. If this is true, then the guidelines should be revised to cover all vessels regardless of size. It is always better to err on the side of caution than take risks. We are talking of the lives of people here.

Another question: Why did the Coast Guard not exercise the extra caution in this case, considering that Sulpicio Lines, which owns MV Princess of the Stars, has figured in many sea disasters? MV Doña Paz was a ship of the Sulpicio Lines. So were MV Doña Marilyn, which sank on Oct. 24, 1988, and MV Princess of the Orient, which went down on Sept. 18, 1998.

MV Doña Marilyn was allowed to sail for Tacloban although Storm Signal No. 3 had been raised over Leyte. Battered by huge waves caused by Typhoon Undang, it capsized and 250 lives were lost. It was the second worst maritime disaster in the Philippines since 1987.

Another Sulpicio ship, MV Princess of the Orient, lashed by the strong winds of Typhoon Gading on Sept. 18, 1998, sank over the coasts of Manila Bay and 150 lives were lost. It was the third worst sea disaster in the country.

Given the bad record of Sulpicio Lines, why did the authorities not exercise extra caution before giving MV Princess of the Stars clearance to sail?

Another question: Was the ship 100-percent seaworthy? Considering its size and its relative large passenger capacity, shouldn't it have been rigorously inspected to determine whether it could safely negotiate a sea voyage?

Regional Coast Guard officer Cecil Clete said that with a typhoon approaching, the ship was outlined to take shelter and its captain tried to do that. However, the engine failed and the ship was dead in the water, right in the path of the typhoon with its 170 kph winds.

If Sulpicio Lines were a human being, it would be considered a "recidivist." It has not been sanctioned and made to pay enough for the big toll in terms of lives lost in the three worst maritime disasters in the country since 1987. On Dec. 29, 1988 the Board of Marine Inquiry absolved Sulpicio Lines of any responsibility in the sinking of the MV Doña Paz and MV Doña Marilyn. In 1992, a Manila regional trial court held Sulpicio Lines "solely responsible" for the accident and ordered it to pay P1.2 million to the heirs of two victims. In 1996, the Court of Appeals absolved Sulpicio Lines of any liability and held the Master on Vessel and Cabin Philippines, which had leased the carrier, by September 2006 the Court of Appeals affirmed a lower court ruling ordering Sulpicio Lines to pay P54.9 million to the family of an engineer who died in the sinking of the MV Doña Paz.

In the case of MV Doña Marilyn, the Board of Marine Inquiry said the disaster was due to force majeure or "an act of God," and held no one responsible. In September 2000, the Department of Justice dropped the criminal case against Sulpicio Lines in connection with the sinking of MV Princess of the Orient, saying that it could not be held criminally responsible for the accident.

What all these cases, including the latest tragedy, indicate is that there is a very low regard for the value of human life, a very loose and relaxed set of rules on clearances for sailing and possible irregularities in the issuance of such clearances.

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'Cold sweat'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

Yet, that bond didn't come overnight. From the start, he reached beyond palace confines. That time other dreaded him as the dreaded time, effort and resources to reach Thailand's powers. Those trampled by the Thai elite found in him an adversary.

"In his book a criminal mastermind against democratic greed," writes Paul Handley in "The King Never Smiles." "All the time, he—although not his controversial family—has drawn little interest in homeless muppings that a benighted crowd brings."

The result has been "a mythology of a selfless, just and apolitical king." That is rarely questioned, in a society where a harsh lese majeure law (outlawing slurs against the monarch's dignity) prevails. Only lavish praise for the royal rich not prints. "The King Never Smiles" said said in Siam Square's well-stocked bookshops. Copy banned a Wall Street Journal article by Pitchaed Isbasubhorn that asked in 2005 if behind the monarchy anyone into the 21st century?

This king rode out 17 military coups and 26 prime ministers. The onset of the "demographic transition" in the early 1970s improved life spans, health services etc. Per capita incomes have gone up 40-fold. Many from the Thai middle class were educated abroad. Less than half of the population remains agrarian.

Nonetheless, the gap between rich and poor persists. "Conspicuous consumption and cost, epicenic corruption are accepted aspect of society," writes Pasuk Phongpaichit, Thai Chulalongkorn's graft maker nor Sharmeen Isoh Mogulmeer's graft maker nor Sharmeen Isoh Mogulmeer.

The king turned the inevitable just before the 79th birthday. "One day, we will grow old and die," he said. "The worst of the Chaophraya river must flow on. And the water that flows in will be replaced..."

By his son, the trained and disliked Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn? "What is nothing that his father is and everything his father isn't," notes Handley. "Gone is the monarchy where every blemish on the throne is kept secret, throughout myth-mists and borders, the prince is feared and reviled... By the early 1980s, he was pulling a gun on his sister. Dhibe Chakri Sirindhorn is Singapore favorite in [1991]...

"My son is a little bit of a Don Juan," Queen Sirikit said in an empress-focused interview. "He is a good student, a good boy, but wanted first him interesting and he finds women everywhere interesting...

"But for the sworn prince of Thailand ... he does not give enough time to his people. [The royal family] does not have Saturdays or weekends.... And Chef demands his weekends. Well, he is quite handsome, and he loves beautiful women, so he needs his weekends."

The king's moral power, however, can not be inherited, pointedly notes the savvy former Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun (a Singapore favorite in 1997). The crown prince does not rate the all-out again.

"A monarchy can be loved, not merely tolerated," the banned Wall Street Journal article said. "Royalty is incompetent to ethical otherwise."

"The Chakri dynasty judged by any standard, has been outstanding," this historian Prince Chulabongse once noted. Most agree with this assessment. The issue now is, will the 10th Chakri king be as good as the ninth? That issue's future stability which impacts the Philippines, is linked to his first question.

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Raw deal

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I HAVE YET TO SEE OTHER, AND MORE IMPORtant, objection to the relentless government is giving one. That is that it is this government that is giving it.

That's incredible stuff to subsidize per se, as I said yesterday and I know one that worked wonderously well. That is the subsidies that came with the program Franklin Delano Roosevelt installed, before the American people in the 1930s, which declared them victims of the direst events they've ever been—the same dire straits we're finding now. That program was the New Deal, and the direst of dire events was the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In striking distress, Roosevelt launched the program during his nomination in 1932. "Throughout the nation men and women, forgotten in the political philosophy of the government, look to us here for guidance and for more equitable opportunity to share in the distribution of wealth... I pledge myself to a new deal for the American people. This is more than a political campaign. It is a call to arms."

He lived up to his pledge. His New Deal consisted of two parts. The first, from 1933 to 1935, aimed at the short-term recovery of all groups. This was when the federal government, by creating positively interventionist, gave out massive subsidies in the form, alongside this, it undertook nationally building reform, emergency relief programs, work relief programs and agricultural programs. The second part, from 1936 to 1938, launched more comprehensive initiatives to redistribute power and resources. This included more protection programs, the Social Security Act, and programs to aid remaining farm and migrant workers.

Critics labeled it thrice during the second part in particular, with its efforts to promote social harmony, but it was swinging it in either favor or commission. Not until John Maynard Keynes' theories about the need for government to prop up capitalism become orthodoxy was the New Deal finally vindicated. To this day, debate rages as to how much the New Deal fed the United States out of the Great Depression, with many observers citing that country's entrance in World War II, which catapulted production to new heights, as the more important factor.

But the American people at least had no doubts about it. They voted FDR to a second four terms in the White House. In doing office in 1945.

I'll leave the matter to go into this subject more deeply on his turn. But since I suspect the GMA regime will be sorely tempted to use this as a ruse to stay in power after 2010, let the battle be drawn why it is the last entity qualified to do so. It's indeed why it shouldn't but longer cost to turn the problem of the New Deal is that government is in the best position to save the country, if not the sole hope of doing so. That is a staggering premise which itself is based on one other staggering premise. That is that the bread of governance has the power to transform the people.

FDR had it. He had the confidence of the farmers, the workers, the unions and the unemployed, and the grudging acceptance at least of the banks, industry and the business community. He had it not with their trust and acquiescence easily, he did so by pushing for his programs with a vigor and sincerity that was not lost on the nation.

That is the one thing this government does not have. Indeed, that is the one thing this government completely conceives of. Its Filipino bench of stats has been more distrusted and disliked, probably including Marcos. At a time when we most need to expose new powers on government to lead us out, we only have a government in search of new powers to expose now only one true vehicle.

A month or so ago, a congressional committee proposed a law that would allow us to hold snap elections to choose a head of state in times of emergency. It never progressed, and seem by largely unnoticed. I myself am not sure if such a law is good or bad per se, to open. At no time does during an entire panic do you need a leader you can trust, one who can unite, inspire, and lead everyone if not to the Promised Land at least out of the sea and Pharaoh's hordes. My own position remains nothing more than to caution that the problem of legitimacy for exactly the same reason. You are illegitimate, or widely perceived to be so—or indeed, you are a goddamn liar and cheat, or widely seen to be so—you are needed like a hole in the head in time of emergency.

That is especially so in light of our other important thing. The Chinese are right. China is also opportunity, and the worse the crisis the better the opportunity. The Great Depression also allowed FDR to reform capitalism, to redistribute power and wealth, to save capitalism from itself. It was the same among the classes and groups of American society. The leftists of course said he did too little, he could have nationalized banking and transportation among others but did not, while the rightists said he did too much, turning the United States into a proto-socialist country.

That is where having a leader this country can universally or reasonably trust becomes even more vital. For the dire times we have been plunged into also offer the incredible opportunity to do what is long prevention of governments from Spanish times has failed to discredulous power and wealth. Which is our only hope of salvation in the end. This country cannot hold with all the losers pulling it apart. In the context that the "opportunity divide between rich and poor" continues, a divide that widens by the day with even more spectacular corruption—due to unbelievable wealth from the poor to the rich—as long as with the "social volcano" continue to rot and vomit. Our crime only offers that opportunity. We need a government that can give us that New Deal.

Right now, all we have to see that given us a Raw Deal.

The UP spirit

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TYPHOON "FRANK" HIT METRO MANILA AND Central Luzon by surprise early last Sunday morning. It was expected to smash into Bicol after dominating Eastern Visayas and exit to the Pacific. Cebu's early weather updates showed that Frank would not make a landfall but far more along our fertile shores, but it suddenly cut across to Iloilo from Eastern Visayas and then neutered upon its landfall in Central Luzon, exiting through Pangasinan. A lot of Manila is now being heaped on the Philippine Coast Guard and Subpic Lines for the sinking of MV Princess of the World off Romblon, but it's clear that Juan Ponce Enrile ship was given the go signal by the PAGI because only Signal No. 1 was hoisted over Central Visayas, for which a ship of this size was deemed. Nobody knew that Frank would be so unpredictable.

The Philippines joins many places recently visited by natural calamities, such as the Mississippi area in the United States, Burma, many provinces of China, including the ancient earthquake zone in Sichuan province, India, Australia and parts of Europe. Yet in other parts of the world, such as California and New York, a heat wave was taking its toll, all these developments were also taking its toll, all these developments were also taking place in the midst of what is known as global warming. But what I really worry about are the terrible effects these disasters will wreak on the global food situation, which was already precarious even before these calamities struck.

The University of the Philippines put on such a grand series of events to celebrate the first 100 years of its existence and the sentiment of alumni who stepped back to their alma mater from various corners of the country and the globe seemed to be that they couldn't have enough of that fabulous feeling of participating in its 100th birthday and soaking in its euphoria. Even the rain that was falling in torrents on me and daughters was beyond the best achievements, and the three nights of concerts at the CCP last week proved tremendously successful. But to many, the grand climax was the alumni homecoming at the Sentrio Ceferino Ciudad established the love by alumnus Nene Asuncion organized by the UP Alumni Association. The whole day extravaganza featured various programs put up by the different batches of UP graduates, from the "Class Sa" Reunion Pasta delivering the keynote speech wherein he stressed that "in critical times the UP alumnus has no right to be saving."

Luckily Frank cooperated and it was only as we left the big dome at 6 p.m. that blinding rains greeted. But what's truly incredible was the display of that "Pinch On UP" spirit as the typhoon still raged because at 8 p.m. the whole of Bicol area under its alumni president Tony Iguerra had scheduled lunch and fellowship at Bahay Alumni in Diliman and many thought it would be canceled. But he said he'd be there, many alumni showed up, among them former UP presidents Bobong Velarde and Nesi Javier and their spouses, Princess and Angge. Other colleges and departments had cancelled their own scheduled homecomings at Bahay Alumni, but hearing that Bicol area doggedly went on with its own, many of them trooped to Bahay Alumni, e.g., the surviving golden jubilarians led by Isaac Peter and alumni from biology, chemistry, etc. That was not all, in the evening, many liberal arts alumni, led by Bodong and Princess Nemenzo, returned to Bahay Alumni for the scheduled ballroom dancing in the absence of Benny Lopez's band, with DJ Olaguer and Tako Tinsay jumping the wide-pregame going. That's the UP spirit for you.

* * *

UP alumni were inducted with all the talk about new name presidents, keynote presidents' speeches, valedictorians and salutatorians, etc. were UP graduates, etc. The new UP Charter signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo was also elevated, especially the part forcing the UP from its academic standardization, which would enable it to give better salaries to its academic and non-academic personnel. For a sobering thought was a media report last week on a recent survey showing that only two UP universities made it to the list of the top 500 universities in the world: UP Diliman at No. 401 and UP Los Baños at No. 491. Only the alumni of Manila University and Cebu were ranked poorly. UP leaders such as former UP president Jose V. Abueva opined that the listing was flawed as its parameters were open to question, for example, universities in many different countries are banned by their bigots budgets more dividing those by their student population results in higher expenditures per student—an immediate "F" for the Philippines. Former UP Diliman Chancellor Sonia Roman has written a paper disputing the results and I'll be glad to write about it. But suffice it to say that there is a lot of room for improvement and last target should be to make UP the leading institution of higher learning at least in Asia.

* * *

June 26 is the 33rd anniversary of the death of Ilyan Del's firebrand founder, Intramuros Enrile. Ka Bataglaw was assassinated by Pope Aloja (but 11 on Oct. 6, 2003). To celebrate it, Alumni will be held in various churches around the country, on June 26, 5 p.m. at the Manila Cathedral, led by Archbishop Cardinal Sin; Cebu, 6:00, Carlos Church in San Manolo, 6:30 p.m. at the Holy Rosary Parish Church in Angeles City, with Archbishop Paciano Aniceto. On Friday, there will also be a 7:15 a.m. Mass at the Santuario de San Jose in Greenhills, San Juan. The public is cordially invited.

No grades for Juan

I WAS ON MY WAY TO WORK ONE DAY WHEN A SLOGAN caught my eye—and caused my eyebrows. "Welcome to a child-friendly school," it read.

Such a slogan welcomes everyone who enters many educational institutions in the primary and secondary levels. It is supposed to project positive thoughts as it connotes a pleasant atmosphere for learners who enroll in these schools. But is it really a child-friendly school?

YOUNG BLOOD

Federicianus D. Conde Jr.

Recently, my little friend started going to school. I was a bit lower that a graded school system is best suited to learners. I inquired and learned of how the traditional educational system. One of more than 30 pupils housed inside a classroom, I listened to the teachers' lectures, learned to memorize numerous informational concepts and did copious assignments. I was motivated by the promise of rewards. The thought of getting high grades gave me the enthusiasm to strive harder in memorizing concepts, burning candles to do my assignments, projects and many more. At the end of the school year, only a few of us in the class reaped the fruits of our toils; the medals distributed on Recognition Day. But while the competition was tough, I ended up getting up the stage year after year to receive the highest honors.

But as the few of us who earned honors rejoiced and celebrated, many others silently cried in disappointment. They were not included on the honors list and this made other people think they were slow learners. Worse, some heard words that hurt their self-esteem. Others, who were even tagged as "repeaters," sinking their morale.

One of them was my cousin Lyka who failed to make the grade under this system. She was not promoted to Grade 2. Teased by her friends and old classmates, Lyka went to school constantly embarrassed by the thought that she was the oldest in the class. She eventually dropped out of school and became a loner. She lost her confidence in high school she ended up in the general section and she graduated carrying the burden of the unforgettable memories of failure and frustration.

Because of her experience she decided not to go to college. Her decision followed her thought. She feared to step into the institution that she had failed in and she ended up not knowing her potentials. Now she is a plain housewife, raising six children, the oldest among them aged 6. I wonder how many are like her in this country.

In my last experience debunked the idea that competition in graded schools brings the best within a child. Competition is obvious in graded schools, like most public schools and private schools. Learners who are classmates and friends compete for the highest grade, rank or honor. Competition builds rivalry among them, sometimes creating friction among them. Some chose to get higher grades. Parents sometimes lobby teachers so that their children will be given better grades than they deserve. There are also those who get a graded school system that most fail to see. They have a difficult perspective on "competition" in the classroom.

Instead of developing a healthy friendship and respect among them, learners become rivals and foes. The kind of competition sometimes results in shaming, unhappiness, frustration, failure or a low quality of education.

That there are many school buses in every city down the east of their class and bear the burden of getting bored and not being challenged, since they are processed by the system in a uniform way. How learners, on the other hand, are under pressure to keep pace with the rest of the class. How all learners are given for individual differences and aptitudes.

For the first time in my experience as a student, I encountered in the primary and secondary levels how a child-friendly atmosphere provided that students performed their duties well. My belief was changed when I was employed in a school teacher in a non-graded school two years ago. I observed and was amazed—even enthralled—by the unique way and more effective way of teaching and learning. Gone are the days when individualized teaching or one-on-one instruction is applied in the school. And with the use of the appropriate teaching aids, substantial and needed skills or knowledge are more easily installed in the minds of the young learners.

People progress at their own pace in learning. That's why recent students are not left behind by others. They don't lose failure to measure up by grades or experience being defined as repeaters at the end of the school year.

The pupils are taught according to their learning abilities and speed. As a result, even slow learners don't feel intimidated by the learning process, while the fast learners continuously progress.

The system inspires pupils to learn every single day because of the genuinely child-friendly system, non-graded schools produce 6- or even 4-year-olds who can read English very well and elementary school graduates who are 9 or 10 years old.

Although I enjoyed the benefits and rewards of the graded school system where I once belonged, I can now see its unhealthy effects on my classmates and me. I was endlessly worrying that one of my classmates might perform better than me and take the honor I had come to consider as mine almost by right. I sometimes wondered why my circle would run out to me. And I felt sorry for those who did not have my good luck to excel.

The education sector seems to be trying its best to uplift the quality of education in this country. But I doubt if private or public schools that operate on a graded school system provide the best education. If they would just shift to a non-graded system, I am quite sure they will be surprised by the results.

Federicianus D. Conde Jr., 20, is a graduate of the Pangasinan State University and works as a schoolteacher in a non-graded school.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to "Youngblood" should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Judicial surrender

"The vote marks the first time the [10] Supreme Court has surrendered the jurisdiction of its courts to a foreign country—and to its nominees to a Third World country which was not known for its not being corrupt."

—Attorney Romeo Capulong, a former Manila and then Interior secretary, on the ruling that the Philippine Supreme Court has no jurisdiction to file a lawsuit to recover the ten dictator's $35 million (about P1.5 billion) stashed in Switzerland

Gifts of the pineapple

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DAET—TYPHOON "FRANK" HAS ROBBED many of the planned activities in this capital town's "Pinyahan" Festival, but not enough to halt the festivities.

Sunday morning, participants in the mass session at Barangay Bibirao opted to go out the many morning and stay home, but no-still found a crowd gathered there. Gusts by the muscle men taking part in the related martial arts competition are to be the evening. The competition, sponsored by the province's three local workers' has spent much of the time pooling for publicity photos amid the roaring wind and light rain. Still, the early waters were not enough to stop a few enthusiasts, along with the mayor, from taking a dip in the sea. Even the police contingent who take and police up the scattered brought in by the tide. Organized by Mayor Tito Sotto, the beach chalmers took on a team, police versus the rest of the town's employees, which they'd show be said for TV broadcasts.

For lunch, we were brought to Bamboo Grill, a small restaurant on amid a verdant garden, and found a feast of native fare. Among the dishes were those cooked in coconut milk, the sweet-sour spicy combination an excellent companion to steaming white rice. Along with grilled tilapia, lato (gelatinous seaweed), pinakbet (a vegetable dish), and the ubiquitous pork adobo, there was also a delicious dish of fresh pineapple, the local specialty, and a sweet pineapple juice.

But we had to proceed to an athletic field for the highlight of the Pinyahan, the street-dancing competition. There were a power range and rare chords between the rain showers, but there was no stopping the dancers and the eager crowd that gyrated from along the route and in the stadium. Heavy beverages competed for the prizes, showing off their collective creativity. The costumes alone were worth the price of admission, with the participants in many cases outfitted from or eyeded into pina. The session continued well into evening, with the barangay delegations, even those that didn't win anything, cooked to continue their festivities at home. Only three did the threatening rains finally fell.

* * *

SINCE "PINYAHAN" IS HELD TO CELEBRATE the "Peninsula Queen" pineapple, a small variety of sweet fruits who has a background in textile milling, says they had pondered the problem of where to outsource the process of shooting together the fine threads, a painstaking, time-consuming process. It was his bright idea to tap provinces in the pineapple belt, who are paid P6,000 for a life of the knotted threads, not a small amount considering that the fiber is light in air.

It takes more than days to set up a loom, determine the threads and then knot them, Lydia Hart said, and in some provinces the patient to be woven into the cloth. The women seated at the looms say they can finish up to two-and-a-half yards of cloth a day, which means it takes a month to finish a piece that is long enough to serve as a standard barong. But now, most of the cloth is still brought to London, Laguna, for embroidery, although some members of the cooperative have already started doing it here.

Fiber materials from the weaving process are turned into hand-made paper, while waste materials from the fiber extraction are turned into charcoal briquets and animal feeds.

* * *

We then walked a short distance to a nearby building where the dried pineapples, jam and juice are prepared.

It is explained to us how the small pineapples are harvested (if the "eyes" are wide open it means the fruit is ripe), peeled and cored. The fruit is then chopped up, soaked, and dried in a large, elevated oven, then either packed as is or sprinkled with sugar and packed in a variety of packaging.

During the dried pineapple bits, we all wanted to bring home samples. We were also impressed by the flavorful universal, delicate and even-colored bits that were the products, but the juice, while cheaper than in Manila, was still beyond our budgets. Instead, we ladies ordered for delicate chocolate or lime made from candied pineapple rinds and wooden clogs.

So, the farmers who are planning any kind of affairs or weddings, we just wanted a visible souvenir from a morning spent learning all about the making of piña cloth and its by-products...all gifts of the remarkable pineapple.

Multiply Kapatiran

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

I SPEND BUSINESS FORUMS INTO THE SAME weariness I answer invitations to political conferences. It is one way to keep up with trends in both market and state.

Last week's World Marketing Conference (initially) enough, a pioneering initiative by the Philippines, which is really quite good as this sort of thing) will be remembered not only for being the first of its kind, but also for hosting the boundary of Multiply, the rapidly growing social networking site.

Every time I turned the young crowd who dressed up at the brand-new SM convention hall, not least by avidly posing for pictures. He described Filipinos as "a very sunny people," and noted, not entirely out of topic: "But do they like to take pictures?"

The Filipino's gregariousness is a big part of Multiply's "incredibly thrilling ride." Of the net week's 9 million subscribers, some 2.2 million are from the Philippines. It is the country's second-biggest social network, after the much older Friendster.

In comparison with Facebook and MySpace, the two biggest social networking sites in the world, Multiply is still a small player. Steve Gaydos, Global Research Head of Symantec, offered a not-unfamiliar comparison. "If MySpace were a scenario, it would be the sixth largest in the world." The local comparison between Pakistan and Bangladesh, and considerably more dense than the Philippines, which is the 12th most populous country.

Gaydos could have said the same thing about Facebook because the news last week said that Facebook has finally blocked Multiply's e-mail invite tool. Invitation MySpace (which Rupert Murdoch bought, famously, only a few years ago).

But Multiply's numbers are nothing to dismiss or almost a billion page views in the most recent month, over 17 million "unique visitors" per month. By that last measure, Multiply would be

inviting distance of, say, Australia.

Pinoys were in the Philippines to launch Multiply Philippines, which he explained to me was essentially a business partnership with the ABS-CBN network. This seems to me to be a tweaking of the business model that Multiply has used in the last four years—that, and a leap of faith, that it won't conflict with local business.

A 2007 Inc. Magazine feature on what went wrong with Friendster lays part of the blame on an over-ambitious twist in the online network's customer. Many of its subscribers turned out to be Filipinos.

"From a business standpoint, the revolution was devastating. Friendster, it turned out, was paying millions of dollars a year to attract eyeballs that were effectively worthless to its advertisers."

Pesario was telling me the reverse capitalism now not the problem or an opportunity.

* * *

I always look forward to discussions with Sandy Pacheco, founder of the Kapatiran partly because his ebullience and his luminous sincerity always more everything sunny, including one's cynicism about politics and Christian commitment.

But I must admit that questions of practice often stumped us. In politics, I am both a moralist and a complete dilettante. In the end I worry about what can be done; politics, as Bismarck remarked over 100 years ago, is "the art of the possible, the reasonable, the

art of the next best."

My last discussion with him, however, has provoked me to offer some tentative suggestions about how to multiply the impact of his Christian political party, Kapatiran.

What follows is a modified proposal.

* * *

The core of the matter: Convert Kapatiran into a genuine, based political party.

There will be resistance, not least from bishops and priests who will either be scandalized by the mere presence of a political organization or uneasy among the lay ministers and the Mother Basic Guilds, as presided by Bellarmine. But I think we will also find a readiness to participate, especially among the engaged laity. Kapatiran's prospective base consists of the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who enjoyed the Pope's Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting or Stanford duty—and now want to take the next step.

It will help that Kapatiran, inspired by the Second Plenary Council of 1991, 1991, cares its core issues to the Church itself. It can reduce its core principles—no party is to speak—into a small handful, including the commitment to fight what the late Pope called the culture of pro-life mentality and the pledge to do away with the graft barrel.

It should design a short, easy to explain formation program—starting in January at the latest, with a one-day condensed version for use when necessary. Issues on costs, it must set up a simple website, where the important documents are easy to access and even easier to print out. Not least, it must insist that party members heed the Pope's call to participate in politics through the disciplined example of Among El Pueblo by donating services as needed.

If a hundred parishes can host thriving chapters, of maybe 50 to 100 members each, by January 2010, Kapatiran may yet reach critical mass in time to make a difference in the May elections.

LETTERS

OFW story: hopes, dreams outweigh fears

AFTER READING RAMEY DAVID'S COLUMN "Love in the time of migration" (Inquirer, 6/14/08), I couldn't help but admit that my life at this point fits into the scenario he painted. Before, I was searching a delayed reference of a nightly news program of a TV station in the Philippines when I received two text messages from my wife. I looked at my watch to check the time—it was half past 1 a.m. from where the messages came. So, I thought, my wife was still awake.

I texted back with my own message which I ended with "Good night," after a few minutes, I got another message from her. She bade me "Good night" to me, but I could sense some despair in her message.

The following morning, in the office, I sent her an e-mail my kids—as my usual way of keeping in touch with them—a message. She replied, and her messages this time clearly exposed her desolation.

I empathize with her. Barely eight months have passed since Deb left and our four kids to work here in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Catching in my embrace a few pictures of them to remind me of our hopes and dreams. It would be my first time to be away from my family that long. Before we decided to take this "big leap" that could make or break our lives, we spent countless hours to prepare, asking for God's guidance.

Our story is not uncommon. Millions of Filipinos have gone abroad, leaving their country, families and loved ones in pursuit of a better life. The stories of OFWs don't necessarily yield to happy endings: philanderings husbands, unfaithful wives, unwary children hanging in feel the warmth of the love of absent parents have become ordinary fare. Yet, these stories are not enough to stop a large number of Filipinos from leaving their families to work abroad.

The lack of opportunities back home is what pushes people like me to leave home for greener pastures; one hopes said dreams of giving our families a better future outweigh our fears of the risks we might have to face in strange lands.

Going back to my wife's posted text messages, I would always reply to them with words of assurance, though I know that those would never offer enough comfort under our present circumstances. (for better that the words are said than allow yourself to wallow in fear.

What you think and what you do is what you will become; that's life's predisposition. If we think life has been very cruel to us, it is not so much because such is our fate but because we have predisposed ourselves to those "cruelties" by our thoughts and actions. Professor Covey is right: it has been very easy to measure the economic benefits of overseas work. But it is doubtful if one can ever quantify what the Filipino family has given up in terms of love, or what it is doing to everyone in.

I just wish though to find ways to recover what I have given up in my pursuit of a decent life for my family. But until I see a better option than going abroad, I'll just have to keep my hopes and dreams alive.

—GINER MARCELO,
ginermarcelo@yahoo.com.ph

Even journalists must be held to account

IN HIS JUNE 11 COLUMN, CORRADO DE Quiroz concedes that defendant should not be powerless when journalists wrongly accuse them. He proposes an ethics body formed by journalists to hear and decide complaints against their abusive peers. We support his suggestion. To penetrate the wall code than the Fourth Estate plays in our society, those in breach of its norms must be held professionally accountable.

When Nolen Olivares first leveled false allegations against our firm, we followed his Quiroz' advice: We published, at great expense, the denial and apology of Ongpin and its lawyer. Mr. Olivares continued to run defamatory articles attacking the firm and its members—no less than Mr. Olivares, in a period of less than two months. Without seeking out the facts and merely verifying the rumors, she simply printed the allegations, laden with insinuations. Repeatedly. Clearly that is beyond journalistic boundaries. That is malice.

Is it fair to publish unverified rumors in the name of public discourse? Is it fair to run a story without first getting all sides? Is that journalism?

De Quiroz admits there is no ethics body today for journalists to police themselves. There is no fear of being shamed before their peers, no hope to be taken away for ethical breach. So the defamation continues, and the public suffers only such redress from the courts under our filed laws.

Yet De Quiroz faults us for suing Olivares. He says it only puts us in disrepute even more. Must we rush to expose victim once to our heckuse it only reminds the public of the criminal's crime? And he argues that suing Olivares only proves that we have something to hide. Are we dismissed if we do not defend if we don't when unjustly smeared by a journalist's pen?

We can only defend ourselves before the venue provided by law and in the only way we know how. We need not out of "disinformation" but in search of vindication. We seem to hold her accountable for smearing our professional reputations, now that we patiently built for the past 20 years.

We are fortunate we can hold Olivares accountable for her false reports before the courts. But we are unfortunate. And for those who seek redress through unlawful means, we join De Quiroz in condemning their acts in the strongest terms. They too must be held accountable.

After five long years, the verdict found Olivares guilty of her own admissions recorded on pixel of her mother. Her entrapment was delayed for over two years. She took another two years to present her defense. We took only four months to present our case.

Pillars lawyers win their case, as it has so often, on legal merit, and say that the courts had not been fair?

As lawyers sworn to uphold the law, we vow to defend a journalist's freedom of speech. We will defend De Quiroz' freedom to state his opinion even if we disagree with it. But we will not take it. But we cannot allow those who abuse this freedom not to be held accountable. Under the rule of law, everyone, journalists included, must exercise their rights with due regard to the rights of others.

—RODOLFA. CRUZ, partner, CVC Law, Villaraza Cruz Marcelo & Angangco

Meloto GK champion but not GK founder

AN INQUIRER NEWS ITEM, TITLED 'GK VIL lage to Rise in Alaminos' (Inquirer, 5/20/08) reported that a memorandum of agreement was signed between Alaminos Mayor Hernani Fernandez and Antonio Meloto of Gawad Kalinga (GK). The Inquirer report referred to Meloto as the "GK founder," which is not exactly the case.

Perhaps it is time for the Inquirer to come and for all correct the wrong designation it gives to Meloto as "GK founder." GK was founded or "founded" by the Couples for Christ (CFC)—not by Meloto. CFC simply tapped Meloto, a CFC member, to work full time on the GK project on housing and livelihood. To have held the position of executive director for the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, which was organized by CFC. In fact, this explains why in 2006 there were two Ramon Magsaysay laureates for GK: Meloto in his personal capacity and CFC as the organization responsible for the phenomenal success of GK.

What has happened over the past years is that the close association of Meloto and GK has created the impression that the former is the single person behind the latter. This perception probably came about because Meloto hardly mentioned CFC in his many public speaking engagements. A lecture presentation of a company exec discussing how Gawad Kalinga succeeded was that he never heard Meloto mention CFC in the several talks by Meloto he listened to. It was only during the breaking-of-CFC that he learned that Gawad Kalinga was actually started by CFC—and not by Meloto. So he said that he felt deceived by the misrepresentation.

It is time to set the record by Meloto when I was involved with a GK project was "champion." Thus, the Inquirer can refer to Meloto as "GK champion," instead of "GK founder" which he never was.

—RICARDO R. RAMOS,
11 Sta. Rosita St., Bo. Kapitolyo, Pasig City

Calderon public school building new toilets

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS ITEM "PUBLIC schools lack toilet, teachers lament" (Inquirer, 6/19/08) in which Calderon Integrated School was mentioned.

Months before this issue surfaced in the media, we at Calderon, with the help of the Department of Education Manila, had taken steps to address the problem. The information about our school that was used by the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) in its press statement is inaccurate. The truth is, the contract for the construction of additional toilets has been awarded to the winning bidder. The construction of additional toilets (part of the rehabilitation of the old building) will begin in a matter of days. We have been assured by engineer Sol Ibanez, project in-spector of the Designing Division, City Engineer's Office, that his office will finish the project next month (at 8 24 hours, if needbe.

It is unfortunate that just when a solution to the problem has been worked out, the impression that nothing is being done about that problem is conveyed through the media. This is unfair to the school administration, to Deputy Mayor Isko Moreno and to Mayor Alfredo Lim, for whom the improvement of school facilities is paramount.

We thus write this letter to correct, in the interest of fairness, any misimpression regarding the inadequate toilets in our school. The problem is being solved in line with Mayor Lim's emphasis on education and health for Manileños.

—CRISALO CLEMENTE,
principal, El Calderon Integrated School,
Burmeza Street, Tondo, Manila

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BURMA'S BROKEN PROMISES

2.4 million Burmese citizens were affected by Cyclone Nargis. Over 134,000 are dead or missing.

On May 24, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced that ruling Burmese General Than Shwe had promised to "allow all aid workers in regardless of nationalities."

Despite this, foreign supply ships with emergency and lifesaving equipment have been turned away or gone home. International relief continues to be slowed.

Burma's delta remains shattered, its people starving and in danger.

General Than Shwe's promises have not been fulfilled.

This is not the only time General Than Shwe has acted without concern for his people. In the wake of the cyclone, his regime renewed the house arrest of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. She has been detained for 12 of the last 19 years.

Today, as hundreds of thousands of lives remain in the balance, the world must not stand by in silence.

BURMA'S NEIGHBORS HAVE THE POWER TO HELP VICTIMS WHO REMAIN DESPERATELY IN NEED.

WE SUPPORT FULL AND IMMEDIATE ACCESS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES. EMERGENCY FOOD, MEDICINE AND LIFESAVING SUPPLIES MUST NOT BE DELAYED ANY LONGER.

LET THE PEOPLE OF BURMA KNOW THE WORLD IS WATCHING.

THE MOST REVEREND
DESMOND M. TUTU
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1984

THE HONORABLE
VÁCLAV HAVEL
Former President of the Czech Republic

DOCTOR
SHIRIN EBADI
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 2003

HIS EXCELLENCY
JOSÉ RAMOS-HORTA
President of East Timor
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1996

THE HONORABLE
CORAZON C. AQUINO
Former President of the Philippines

THE HONORABLE
ANWAR IBRAHIM
Former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia

THE HONORABLE
ABDURRAHMAN WAHID
Former President of Indonesia

NOT ON OUR WATCH

photo by Prashant Panjiar / Creative Images

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Hopes fade for those missing in flood

Front page A1

of the country for three days, Frank finally left the country yesterday.

But the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said in its bulletin that the storm and the Visayas would continue to experience heavy rains.

Weather specialist Cris Rosas said Frank, which was spotted 390 kilometer west northwest of Tacloban City at 4 p.m. yesterday and heading toward the South China Sea, would continue to haul the southwest monsoon or "habagat."

Command action

In the face of the widespread destruction wrought by Frank, the commander-in-chief of military people was what saved many lives, a top official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said.

CBCP president and Bohol archbishop Angel Lagdameo said the typhoon brought "unprecedented" damage to his province and to other areas but that is also produced stories of heroism from the communities left.

"Accompanying the bad news" ... are stories too of back heroic and common sense characters. Command action is at work ... God bless them," Lagdameo said in a statement.

But the picture had anxious search for the government officials who left for an official visit to the United States while thousands of Filipinos were in desperate need of assistance.

"In the face of the ... opposition strip of more than 60 of our national leadership is the United States for more than a week, here are we talk of austerity and frugality in spending the people's taxes ...?" the Archbishop said.

Lagdameo made no direct mention of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her party who are on their way to Washington for a meeting with US President George W Bush.

'Unparalleled damage'

Vice President Noli de Castro, Health Secretary Francisco Duque, Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral and Secretary Richard Gordon and Manuel "Mar" Roxas visited affected areas in the Visayas to assess the situation and hand out relief assistance.

In Iloilo City, Mayor Jerry Treñas ordered regional agencies to coordinate with local government units to hasten the delivery of assistance.

"The damage is of unparalleled proportions," Duque told the barrios in a telephone interview.

Duque said a major concern was how to prevent an outbreak of diseases, especially waterborne illnesses and respiratory tract infections.

He noted that many hospitals had been damaged.

The provincial disaster coordinating council of Iloilo reported 937 dead, 320 missing and 15 injured in the province as of 12:30 p.m. yesterday. Thirty-one deaths were reported in neighboring Capiz.

Iloilo Gov. Neil Tupas Jr. estimated the damage to infrastructure at P500 million to this province and P100 million to Iloilo City, residents of the capital town of Balfin and neighboring areas waded through ankle-deep mud in the aftermath of the worst flooding experienced in Western Visayas.

"It's terrible here," Akbar Rep. Florencio Miraflores said on the phone.

Miraflores said the whole province had no electricity and the lines of two telephone companies were still down.

Communication in the province has been virtually cut off since Saturday with mobile phone signals being erratic.

In Iloilo City alone, 198,345 persons were in evacuation centers as 135 out of the 180 barangays were flooded, OIC. Mayor Jed Mabilo Patrick said.

Flooding displaced more than 350,000 people in various towns.

More deaths elsewhere

Elsewhere in the Visayas, Frank left 16 dead and over 200 missing while displacing thousands of families in Negros Occidental, Cebu and Eastern Visayas, relief agencies reported.

Seven people died in Eastern Visayas, mostly due to drowning, four were killed in Negros Occidental and and five in Cebu.

One of those killed in Negros Occidental was an eight-year-old girl who fell into a river, while two adults died of heart attacks after floods swept through their houses.

Some 13,000 families were displaced in Eastern Visayas.

The death toll in Central Mindanao rose to 23 with the recovery of the bodies of three people—two of their children—washed away earlier by flash floods.

Chaos in some schools in Catabato City have been suspended indefinitely according to Mayor Muslimin Sema.

"The flooding was a result of the release of our forces," Sema said on radio. "It is [also] a result of climate change. Or let time for us to ... save our environment."

Sultan Kudarat phenomenon

For 30-year-old Rolando Lozarie, whose house was damaged by floods, loggers in the mountain ranges of Bintia, Buldon and Mlaang in Sharif Kabunsuan were to blame for what had happened.

"Logging was rampant there in the 1970s and 1980s. What we are experiencing is the effect of massive cutting of trees there," he said.

Simsay river, the main tributary from the mountains of Buldon, Bintia and Mlaang, overflowed and flooded many downtown.

Alameda Mayor Ernesto Concepcion blamed the flooding in his town on logging, both illegal and legal.

Former Rep. Michael Mastura cited three main reasons why heavy flooding occurred in Indanan inclusive town, a phenomenon that had never occurred in the past.

He said logging in Indanan, Barira and the mountains of Alamada and Libungan in North Cotabato destroyed the forest that used to hold rainwater.

He also cited the siltation of Rio Grande de Mindanao that caused the floodwater to flow to residential areas, and government's failure to foresee what would happen.

Two people died in Quezon province, an eight-year-old boy who was struck by a falling palm tree in Guinayan town.

Tidal wave

In Dilasag town in northern Quezon, a small tidal wave higher than "the roof of a three-storey house" battered a coastal village, destroying at least 320 houses.

Three people were killed in Mauban, where the typhoon downed power and communication lines, isolating the province, relief officials said.

The province has also been placed under a state of calamity.

Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo said damages exceeding P5 million for relief operations.

Around 500 houses were damaged in Dinalungan and roads have been impassable since Saturday due to fallen trees and landslides.

In Cavite, floods have subsided in the three coastal towns of Rosario, Cavite and Noveleta, and in Cavite City.

A total of 584,711 persons were affected by the typhoon, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) said.

Agriculture Undersecretary Bernie Fondevilla said that the damage inflicted over the farmlands by the typhoon, which reports from Norman Bordallo, Ed Gubaccangan Jr., Allison B. Lopez and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila; Carla Gomez, Joey A. Gallabo, Cynth G. Cabacungan, Vicente Lubos, Abraham Mateo Bolos, David Dizon, Tonette Orejas and Felipe V. Cabico, Inquirer Visayas; and Zilkie Bermudez, Inquirer Mindanao

DA: Frank destroys crops worth P555M

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE yesterday placed at P555 million the damage to crops wrought by Typhoon "Frank" to 246,441 hectares of farmland in Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas and Caldabarzon.

Junior Secretary Raul Gonzalez also reported that floods spawned by the typhoon damaged 180,000 sacks of rice stored in the Iloilo warehouse of the National Food Authority (NFA).

According to a report by the Department of Agriculture's Central Action Center, the typhoon damaged a total of 246,213.9 ha planted to palay, 1,061 ha to corn and 3,164 ha planted to vegetables and high-value commercial crops.

The report said that farms in Western Visayas sustained the biggest crop damage amounting to P430.484 million, with a total of 229,152 ha planted to palay either totally or partially damaged.

Losses in palay production were estimated at 17,784 metric tons worth about P448.655 million. The affected rice growing provinces were Batangas, Laguna, Quezon, Negros Occidental, Leyte, Bohol, Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar.

Even so, the DA Central Action Center said the volume of palay lost would have "a minimal impact on the total production goal for the July-September period as it represented only 0.52 percent of the target production of 9.44 million metric tons in the third quarter."

Gonzalez also said 30% of fields had matured into the 150,000 sacks of rice damaged as the height of the typhoon would not lead to a shortage as there was a sufficient buffer stock in Western Visayas.

Damage to corn amounted to P6.28 million, particularly in Batangas, Cavite, Quezon, Bukidnon and Cebu.

According to the DA Central Action Center, farms in Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Bicol and Quezon also lost about P300 million worth of vegetables and high-value commercial crops. Reports from Amy R. Remo and Lelio B. Saliverio

House of Usher ...

Front page A1

[URIZ.] million].

Int. Usher, a 44-year-old from Yorkshire in England, launched the unusual auction after announcing on his blog, "I have had enough of my life! I don't want it any more! You can have it if you like!"

Usher, who has lived in the eastern city of Perth for the past six years, said he decided to sell after breaking up with his wife because everything in the house was a "reminder of the wonderful past we shared."

The former rug salesman said the auction surpassed his hopes.the price of A$308,000 on the first day of the weeklong auction on Sunday.

When Usher woke to bed on Sunday night, his life was worth A$650,000, according to bids on the Internet auction site eBay. By early Monday, it was valued at a staggering A$2.3 million.

"I earned the computer on [Monday morning] and it was A$2.3 million and I burst into laughing," Usher told Agence France-Presse.

Genuine offers!

While it was possible that some of the bidders were "idiots trying to make a name for themselves," Usher said he was confident there were genuine offers in the mix.

Even so, Usher said the value of the physical assets for sale—including his three-bedroom Perth home, 19-year-old Mazda 929 sedan, a 1966 motorbike and a jumbo...sum just $$350,000 to $$500,000.

Have passport will travel

Usher has also promised that the winner will be introduced to his friends and lifestyle and will secure his former job as a rug store assistant for two weeks initially. This may be extended depending on the store owners' agreement.

All Usher will retain is his passport, undies and the clothes on his back if the deal goes through.

Bidders may want to buy the life package in small items separately, profiting from their value as collectible items, he said. AFP

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Panlilio files plunder rap vs Pineda

'Frank' leaves 2 mountaineers dead in Zambales

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SIBUL SPRINGS, ZAMBALES—TWO MEMBERS of a mountaineering club in Quezon City died after a strong current swept them while their group was crossing a creek in Barangay Pundapuit in San Antonio town on Sunday.

One of their companions was also reported missing while nine others were rescued. They belonged to the AMCI Mountaineers Club based in Metro Manila, police said.

The bodies of Joseph Briones and Jhoen Pimentel were recovered on Sunday and Monday, according to Zambales police director Senior Supt. Fernando Peña.

Search was suspended on Monday for Thaddeus Bonifacio, he said.

Ronell Taberner, Pundapuit barangay captain, said the group went to the Sto. Tomas-Iba branch south of the village but they encountered swollen creeks on their way back to the town proper at 12:30 p.m. Typhoon "Frank" was crossing Zambales at that time, carrying strong wind and rain.

In La Union, 23 fishermen from Agoo town were reported missing since 4 a.m. Sunday when they went fishing in the Lingayen Gulf, reports reaching the provincial police on Monday said.

La Union police director Supt. Ariel Tolit. said the fishermen, residents of Sitio Bacsilan Silver and Balbacone in Agoo, were on four boats.

Tolit said their families reported to the police that the fishermen failed to return home on Sunday. He asked police officials in Pangasinan and La Union to relay the information on the missing fishermen to police and local officials in coastal towns along the Lingayen Gulf to report any sighting of the missing boats or the fishermen.

Evacuations

In Pangasinan, 179 families from different villages in Dagupan City were evacuated on Sunday night as the typhoon passed through Pangasinan.

The provincial disaster coordinating council (PDCC) said four school buildings lost their roofs in the inland town of Asingan and a classroom was damaged in Mapandan town.

"We are thankful that the typhoon did not cause so much damage in the province," said Cipriano Orduna, provincial information officer.

Pangasinan was still recovering from the heavy beating from tropical storm "Cosme" on May 17, when crops, fishponds and property worth P4.3 billion were destroyed.

Orduna said the PDCC was monitoring the province's rivers after the Agno River flood Pozorrubio and Pharing Creek in Bautista town swelled from the continuous rains and made some roads impassable.

Nilsaco said the Binalonan and Tagudin-Sinait rivers were swollen and threatened to submerge low-lying areas of Ilo. Barbaza, Catarataw, Binmaley and Mangaldan towns and the cities of Dagupan and Urdaneta.

In Central Luzon, Chief Supt. Uriel Dio, regional police director and chair of the regional disaster coordinating council (RDCC), said the number of evacuees in the region on Monday reached 4,000 people, mostly from Bataan.

Inot Amparo, regional chief of the Office of the Civil Defense, said the province itself ran hit by Frank was Bataan.

By late Sunday, 18 towns and 71 villages in Bataan were under water in three feet of floodwater. —Reports from Cesar Villa, Fredie Orejas and Carmela Reyes, and Rolando Sotelo-Fuertes and Gabriel Cacilhenas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

ALLEGED partner Reynaldo "Bong" Pineda. [illegible]

PANLILIO at Ombudsman's office filing charges against Pineda. [illegible]

PAMBANGA GOV. EDDIE Panlilio yesterday haled Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda to the Office of the Ombudsman, formally putting a face to one of the "John Does" who supposedly helped former President Joseph Estrada plunder P1 billion during his administration.

A suspected gambling lord, Pineda has figured prominently in the landmark plunder trial of Estrada as among those who supposedly conspired with the former president in pocketing millions of pesos in illegal gambling payoffs.

But Pineda was not named as respondent in the plunder case, which the Sandiganbayan concluded on Sept. 12 that year with a guilty verdict on Estrada. It used Panlilio in the 12-page complaint.

"The decision rendered by the Sandiganbayan and the evidence in possession of the Ombudsman] and prosecution bear the Sandiganbayan, which led to the conviction of Estrada], also support an indictment for plunder of respondent Bong Pineda," Panlilio stated.

Panlilio, a Catholic priest, was accompanied by his counsel, Ernesto Francisco, when he subscribed to his complaint at the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday.

'Local politics'

The Bataan rival to get Pineda's comments on Monday but his wife said son could not contact him. His son, Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda, declined to comment, saying his father's lawyer would answer the complaint.

Reached by phone, Estrada's spokesperson, Margaux Salcedo, said Pineda's move was more of a "case of local politics."

Salcedo added that Pineda's wife, Lilia, a former Pampanga board member, was narrowly defeated by Panlilio in the gubernatorial race. She even questioned the priest's victory he pointed out.

He also reiterated that he has withdrawn his earlier findings are any "business connection" with Pineda.

Probable cause

The ombudsman must last year found Estrada guilty of pocketing P545 million in "jueteng" payoffs and receiving P189 million in commissions from stock market purchases of government-managed employee pension funds.

But Estrada pardoned in October by President Macapagal-Arroyo barely two months after his conviction saved him from a lifetime imprisonment.

Francisco explained that the filing of the complaint was for the anti-graft body to find probable cause against Pineda and include him in the plunder case, which has yet to be completely closed because five more accused have yet to be tried.

The Sandiganbayan has a standing warrant of arrest against Estrada for plunder, money laundering and perjury.

Estrada's camp has also filed a motion for reconsideration of the anti-graft court's decision convicting him of plunder.

Panlilio filed the complaint against Pineda and a plunder case with the Special Division he "recognized" with respect to the respondent.

Panlilio said Pineda was mentioned more than eight times in the final court decision in having helped Estrada amass ill-gotten wealth.

"[The] exclusion of [Pineda from the charges] does not happen to favour President Estrada but is big question to the people," Panlilio said after he filed the complaint before Marilyn Gabon, director of the Ombudsman's public assistance bureau in Quezon City.

Reading from a statement, Panlilio told reporters that the exclusion of Pineda from the Estrada plunder case "constitutes a gross oversight of justice which must be remedied, and which this complaint seeks to rectify."

"We must not substantially forget or ignore those who have sought to corrupt the highest office of the land," said Panlilio, a Catholic priest who defeated Pineda's wife, former Pampanga Board Member Lilia Pineda, to the May 2007 gubernatorial election.

"As we desire leadership by example, so do we also desire justice by example," Panlilio said.

Collective voice

He said "collective voice [must be raised] against this pervasive perversion, or else governance will not have any moral ground to stand on."

He said he has "nothing personal" against Pineda. "This is not my personal crusade. This is the crusade of countless of churches and people who want good governance," he said.

Adding Pampanga of journey was part of that crusade, he added.

"It will be an entirely new trial," he said.

According to Francisco, Pineda qualified for plunder because the plunder law, Republic Act 7080, states that "any person who participated with said public officer in the commission of an offense contributing to the crime of plunder shall likewise be punished for such offense." With reports from Dancel Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

DOJ to reinvestigate 15-month-old killing of militant leader in Davao

DAVAO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Justice is sending a team to reinvestigate the assassination of a militant leader here 15 months ago.

Chief Inspector Anthony Pedro, city police spokesman, said Monday they had already been informed about the imminent arrival of the DOJ team, which would look into the killing of Renato Bendulo, the provincial coordinator of Anak Pawis.

Pedro, his daughter and a grandchild, were on their way home on March 2 and were waiting for a ride on the corner of Bonifacio and Lim Extension here when he was attacked by two motorcycle-riding gunmen.

Pedro, 53, tried to run away after he was shot several times but eventually slumped on the ground.

He died from four bullet wounds in the head and chest.

Although no arrest's dawn of the assassins were produced from the description of the suspects provided by his daughter, the identity of Pedro's killers and their motive remains unknown.

One theory that the police floated is that his death had something to do with his attempts to organize workers of a company here.

But Bendulo's relatives in the province and said they suspected it has more to do with Bendulo's call for a speedy investigation of a massacre allegedly perpetrated by the military in Mabasan, Davao del Sur.

In Cagayan de Oro City, Bernadey International said the attacks against militants, journalists and activists people continue to occur in various parts of the country.

"Activists, journalists, and ordinary people continue to live in fear because the perpetrators remain not free," Dr. Antonio Buenaj, at Philippine section director, said during the book launch of the 2008 Report on Monday.

Although no arrests have been filed against nine alleged perpetrators of summary executions, justice remains elusive and the possibility of getting genuine justice remains unsure. This is because domestic investigators of human rights violations are not done with due diligence, either because of unwillingness to do so or because of incompetence to do proper investigation," Buenaj said.

The AI report said 33 people became victims of political killings in the country this year, bringing the total number to 887 since 2001.

Buenaj said the government has failed to concretely address the issue head on and has virtually encouraged the military despite many evidences pointing to soldiers as perpetrators.

"Few prosecutions were brought against those responsible for political killings and disappearances. In a rare case, two soldiers were charged with murder in May following the killing in 2006 of Sanita Ilos. Bona, a peasant in Bacnotan, Ilocos province. Shortly after, however, the charges were dropped due to lack of evidence," Buenaj said. —EMILY S. AQUINO and Ma. Cecilia Rodriguez, Inquirer Mindanao

NEWSBRIEFS

■ CITY OF SAN FERNANDO

29 hurt in Bulacan mishap

AT LEAST 29 passengers of a bus collided in broad bus were hurt when the vehicle ran over concrete barriers set along a section of the North Luzon Expressway in Pandi, Bulacan, on Sunday.

A report from the traffic center of the Manila North Tollways Corp. said Dennis Pajarillo, driver of the Dagupan Bus that figured in the accident, told investigators that he "lost control" of the bus while it was running 80 KPH at 7:40 p.m.

Motorists came to the rescue of the injured passengers and took them to nearby hospitals and clinics, MNTC reports said. —Jaime Dupaz, Inquirer Central Luzon

■ MAASIN CITY

Cab drivers strike

HUNDREDS of commuters within the city and the suburbs were stranded when motor cab drivers staged a strike over the inaction of the city council on their petition for fare hike.

Thursday and yesterday, they were waiting for their rides at the empty tricycle terminal in the town proper.

Earlier in the morning, the drivers, spearheaded by Maasin Motorcab Operators and Drivers Association went to the city hall to discuss their petition for taxi rate hike with city officials but nobody blocked them.

The MMODA members were waiting for a fare adjustment of P1 and P3 for trips within the city proper and those outside the city proper, respectively.

Jun Aviso, Inquirer Visayas

■ DAVAO CITY

Seminar on aikido

YUP Tokyo teacher Jun Nonomi Sensei will host aikido practitioners and students in the Davao City Mid-year Aikido Seminar on July 4-6 at The Tent, Matina Town Square here.

Holder of a 7th degree black belt, Jun Nonomi Sensei is the chief instructor of Tokyo Hakkaikai Dojo in Tokyo, Japan. He studied Aikido at the Aikikai Hombu Dojo under the late Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido. He is also an Aikido instructor for teaching style is a blend of eastern and western techniques.

For more info, call or text Marielle Magsaysay at 09178881117 or 09920183278, or Reggie Dechez at 09477052208.

Mine firm seeks Palace help to oust Vizcaya gov

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—A foreign company has sought the intervention of Malacañang in an ongoing hearing tomorrow by filing an administrative complaint against two provincial officials who have opposed the firm's proposed $137-million project here.

OceanaGold Philippines Inc. has filed charges of abuse of authority, misconduct and oppression with the Office of the Ombudsman against Gov. Luisa Cuaresma and Board Member Edgardo Balgos for supposedly stopping the firm's operations in Barangay Didipio in Kasibu town.

In his June 18 complaint, Gil Malapajo, OceanaGold's assistant general manager for the Didipio project, said Cuaresma abused her powers when she issued a cease-and-desist order against the company for its refusal to pay at least P28 million in supposed quarry taxes to the project.

"Governor Cuaresma, with manifest partiality and evident bad faith and gross inexcusable negligence, issued the CDO dated April 9, 2008, without any legal basis, apart from being malicious, oppressive and motivated by ill will," Malapajo said.

The company invoked Section 447 of the Local Government Code, which states that complaints against elective officials of a province should be filed before the Office of the President.

The hearings on Monday tried to get Cuaresma's reactions to the charges but she was out of her office. Her office staff said they did not know where the governor was.

But Cuaresma, in an interview last week, shrugged off the charges earlier filed by OceanaGold against her and other provincial officials, saying she was merely performing her job of enforcing the province's tax ordinances.

"If I don't do this, anyone can sue me for dereliction of duty," she said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the provincial government have been locked in a conflict since May after Environment Secretary Lito Atienza convinced Cuaresma's CDO and ordered OceanaGold to resume its operations.

Atienza said OceanaGold should not pay the quarry tax being imposed by the province of Nueva Vizcaya because the company's earth-moving activities in Didipio are not considered quarrying, and that the firm, under its operating permit, is exempt from payment of local taxes.

In an earlier interview, Atienza said Cuaresma should "come to her senses" and realize that stopping a mining project sanctioned by government is unlawful.

Cuaresma's allies in the provincial board, in turn, said Atienza deserved to get a "holidays bopardi" award for his supposed improper handling of the Didipio controversy and a "bodapill (slang for irony)" award for allegedly harassing the Filipino mayors.

Atienza has laughed off the charges.

Last week, Malapajo, on behalf of the company, also filed criminal and administrative complaints against Cuaresma, Balgos and three other government workers, including a police official, in connection with the mining controversy.

Malapajo assailed the charges as a flagrant harassment by the company against provincial officials, in its supposed effort to escape obligations to pay local taxes. —Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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MEGAWORLD

A plus METRO
Editor Peter G. Dipasupil

Rescue teams out for missing persons

Searchers comb Antipolo, San Mateo town for typhoon victims

By Beverly T. Mahinicad

SEARCH AND RESCUE operations are ongoing for five people who went missing in San Mateo town in Rizal province after the boat they were riding on capsized on Sunday because of strong winds and floods spawned by Typhoon "Frank."

Search and rescue operations for the body of Ebony Cabiles, 34, one of the passengers who was earlier reported as missing.

The five missing passengers were identified as Jun Barbasabe, Rio Dalbosin, Lizalinga Fabella, a woman identified only as Elma and a man named Tomas.

According to the provincial public information office, 12 people boarded a boat to cross the Tumana River at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

At that time, the Tumana Bridge was impassable due to floods.

Strong rains and winds, however, caused the boat to capsize.

Six of the passengers were rescued immediately by local officials, residents and members of the Navy rescue team who were near the site of the incident.

The six were identified as Chanto and Charlyn Bercia, Desberg Lindin, Cielo Guerra, Edgar Velera and Raquel de Belen.

Meanwhile, a rescue operation is also ongoing in Antipolo City for a man who fell off a bridge in Barangay Dela Paz on Sunday.

Bernardo Cabiles, 65, was reported missing after he fell off the bridge and was swept away by the strong water current.

Cabiles's companions told the police that the victim could have had a few drinks before the incident.

ABOVE, shot taken by the Philippine Air Force show a swollen Marikina River (left) and floodwaters inundating parts of Metro Manila.

MMDA to extend aid to provinces, families out of Metro hardest hit by Typhoon 'Frank'

By DJ Yap

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPMENT Authority (MMDA) announced yesterday it would deploy its personnel to provinces outside its jurisdiction to clear streets, drainage systems and waterways of all debris left by Typhoon "Frank."

In response to a directive from President Macapagal-Arroyo, the agency offered assistance to affected families in places across the country hardest hit by the typhoon over the weekend.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the agency would be coordinating with the National Disaster Coordinating Center (NDCC) and local officials for the immediate dispatch of MMDA rescue and flood control personnel as well as heavy equipment in disaster-stricken areas.

The massive clearing operations would be conducted in the provinces of Cebu, Bicolandia, Leyte, La Union, Benguet, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Zambales, Batangas and Bulacan, Fernando said.

Mr Arroyo issued the order to Fernando to extend the MMDA's flood control and clearing operations to affected provinces during the convening of the NDCC held at the Department of National Defense on Sunday.

In a statement, Fernando quoted the President as saying that because Metro Manila was not severely affected by the typhoon despite massive flooding in several areas, it would be better to put the agency's manpower and other resources to greater use elsewhere.

Yesterday, the MMDA said it has readied 10 rock drillers, backhoes, concrete breakers, compressors, light trucks, generator sets, mandibles and dozers to be shipping to the affected provinces upon the request of NDCC and local officials.

Last Sunday Fernando, together with MMDA officials and a sidewalk clearing team, went around the metropolis to check flooded streets, drainage systems, rivers, creeks and other waterways, and instructed his men to clear them of debris.

During the inspection, Fernando noted that Roxas District in Quezon City and San Juan City were partially submerged due to the swelling of the rivers and tributaries around them.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno said that since it was high tide at the height of the storm, there was heavy flooding in coastal areas from the surge of water from the bay area to inland.

In Metro Manila yesterday morning, MMDA street sweepers, landscape personnel and sidewalk clearing teams began removing garbage, broken twigs and debris strewn on major and secondary roads.

No classes in 24 Metro Manila schools; Taguig families evacuated to temporary shelters

By Beverly T. Mahinicad and Julie M. Aurelio

CLASSES ARE STILL SUSPENDED IN 24 Metro Manila schools that remain underwater because of heavy rains brought on by Typhoon "Frank" on Sunday.

The Department of Education (DepEd) said the affected schools are in the cities of Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela and the Taguig-Pateros area.

For the second straight day, there will be no classes in the following schools in Malabon and Navotas: Dagang Bayan Elementary School, Navotas Elementary School, Hulong Hoa Elementary School, Tangos National High School, Concepcion I Elementary School, Inarapido Main Elementary School, Panghulo National Elementary School, Panghulo Main Elementary School, Henghalo 1 Elementary School, Tonsuya Elementary School, Tinajeros National High School and Tanza Elementary School.

In Valenzuela, the affected schools are Pio Valenzuela Elementary School, Ida Elementary School, A. Flores Elementary School, Tagalag Elementary School, Pasolo Elementary School, Malanday Dale Elementary School, Mt. Intl. Diego Elementary School, Coloong Elementary School, Hale National High School and Pasolo Elementary School.

In the Taguig City-Pateros areas, classes will remain suspended at G. Papa Cruz Elementary School.

According to the education department, local government officials may decide on their own to suspend classes solely depending on the conditions in their areas.

"Depending on actual conditions in a locality, the local government and school authorities may exercise their discretion to suspend classes," the DepEd said.

Evacuation

In Taguig City, 166 families were evacuated from areas which were under that to seven high floodwaters.

Taguig Mayor Freddie Tiñga immediately ordered the city's Disaster Management Council to oversee the evacuation process and to monitor flooded areas.

A total of 81 families on M. L. Quezon, Highdrainage and A. Reyes streets in Barangay Lower Bicutan were moved to the ILP Cruz Elementary School.

In Barangay Maharlika, some 54 families were evacuated from Purok 2 in the Upper Bicutan.

Taguig public information officer Jose Sarmen said 12 other families were transferred to the Napindan Elementary School from their homes in Lubos Street in Barangay Napindan.

Around 15 families were also rescued from flooded areas in Barangay Bagumbayan and were given temporary shelter at the Tipas Elementary School. Another 15 families, including 15 families from the Bonanitta Village in Barangay Sta. Ana were brought to the Sta. Ana Elementary School.

Four trucks were fielded by the National Disaster Coordinating Office and the Philippine Army to help in the evacuation of the affected residents, according to Joint Media of the Public Order and Safety Office.

The City Health Office reported no casualties or injuries as the Office of Social Welfare and Development started distributing relief goods to the affected families.

Las Piñas City Mayor Vergel Aguilar, meanwhile, ordered the deployment of 50 men to declog the city's waterways after Typhoon Frank caused the Zapote river to swell over the weekend.

Aguilar summoned personnel from the engineering and maintenance department to clear creeks, drainage systems and other waterways of garbage and other obstructions.

"Garbage is often a contributing factor especially when it clogs waterways and causes flooding," Aguilar said through his spokesperson, Jenny Cardillano.

Cardillano said eight out of the 20 barangays in the city were inundated in knee-deep floodwaters as Frank battered Metro Manila over the weekend although by yesterday morning, the waters had started to recede.

Did you know

ON JUNE 24, 1571, the feast of St. John the Baptist, Spanish colonizers established a municipal government in Manila consisting of two mayors, 12 councilors and a secretary who would rule over 250 residents. All ordinances passed by the councilors needed the approval of Governor General Miguel Lopez de Legazpi.

Cyril L. Bonalaan, Inquirer Research

'Rodriguez dump will no longer accept Metro trash'

By Beverly T. Mahinlidad and DJ Yap

METRO MANILA'S GARBAGE DUMPSITE IN RODRIGUEZ, Rizal no longer welcome to the 15-hectare landfill operated by the Rizal provincial government in the Marcos town.

In a statement issued yesterday, Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares III said the 45-day temporary permit issued to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to throw garbage to the facility expired on Sunday.

He told the business that the agency would have to wait for the provincial board to decide whether or not it would allow the MMDA to continue using the landfill which is supposed to be for the province's exclusive use.

"The Rizal government will not renew or issue another permit to the MMDA until the Rizal Provincial Board finishes its deliberation and comes up with a final resolution," he said in a phone interview.

Ynares granted the provincial permit to the MMDA last May 8 after the agency asked for more time to look for alternative dumps for garbage collected from Metro Manila.

Its MMDA official said they have started diverting garbage trucks that used to dump their load at the 39-hectare Rodriguez landfill to other waste facilities in neighboring provinces.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno said the public need not worry about another garbage crisis since sanitary landfills in Cavite, Pampanga, Norzagaray, Bulacan, San Pedro, Laguna and Pier 18 in Navotas City could make up for the void left by the closure of the Rodriguez dump.

He added, however, that the MMDA was still seeking a run-around concession to the dumpsite run by Rodriguez and Board officials regarding Metro Manila's use of the facility. The request was filed two weeks ago, but local officials have not yet responded to the letter, he said.

Nazareno insisted that Metro Manila could still manage even with the closure of the Rodriguez landfill. "We may have problems but nothing major," he told the business in a phone interview.

Of the 8,000 metric tons of trash generated by Metro Manila residents every day, around 3,000 to 4,000 metric tons are taken to the Rodriguez dump.

Ynares said the provincial board was still assessing how opening the landfill to garbage from outside the province would affect the facility's "life span."

(ALMOST) BACK TO NORMAL
Boats are nearly done on Manila Bay although dark clouds still lurk in the horizon, a day after Typhoon "Frank" swept through the metropolis.

That vision again

ON JAN. 27, 2007, I WROTE about a vision I had during a spiritual pilgrimage to India.

I saw a hospital room with men and women in white functionally nursing around.

In that vision, I saw a group of people outside the hospital room with a worried look.

Three months later, my vision became a reality.

Yesterday, I had the same vision. But this time, I saw a body covered with a sheet of white hospital cloth.

Right now, I can't make heads or tails of the vision I had yesterday.

* * *

On Oct. 19, 2007, I frantically called some high government officials (I won't name them but those officials know I'm referring to them) to ask what was going on in the country.

I had a very strong feeling of a disaster about to happen. I had an idea when and where it would take place. That was on a Thursday.

The officials I called said they had no idea. The following day, a Friday, a big explosion occurred at Glorietta 2.

* * *

Several years ago, I went online during at Sea Pelmas resort off Puerto Princesa in Palawan.

That was a few months after all the hostages kidnapped from Sipadan, a Malaysian resort, were released.

While resting after the dive, I told my diving buddy, Helen Ong, I felt that the Abu Sayyaf, or Moro bandit group (there are different Sipadan kidnappings), would strike again and this time it would be at a resort in Palawan.

Palawan has many resorts where foreign tourists go. I said I had a feeling the Abu Sayyaf might strike at one of the resorts in El Nido or Barangay.

Ambaguio is an island paradise, a favorite vacation spot of Hollywood stars.

Nelson Ong laughed at me. "That won't happen here in Palawan, because all the resorts have guards who are well armed," he told me. Weeks later, the Abu Sayyaf struck at Sea Pelmas.

The bandit group's original target was El Nido or Amanpulo, but they got lost along the way, and ended up at Sea Pelmas.

* * *

Am I a seer or a visionary? I don't know.

But if it's a gift from the heavens, then I willingly accept it. If I really have this gift, then can I be sure I will use it to benefit others.

* * *

The Go family that owns Solgen in Cavite should leave shipping to others and venture into another business because running a shipping line seems to be a jinx.

On Dec. 20, 1987, the MV Doña Pia, a Sulpicio Lines ferry, collided with a tanker that escalated in the world's worst peacetime sea tragedy that left 4,000 people dead.

On Dec. 18, 1998, Sulpicio Lines' 40% Princess of the Orient en route to Cebu sank off Mariveles in fury during a typhoon, in June. 150 passengers were confirmed dead.

And now, the Princess of the Stars carrying more than 800 passengers and crew sank during Typhoon "Frank" off Sibuyan Island.

* * *

I could only sympathize with Vice Adm. Wilfredo Tamayo, Coast Guard commandant, while he was being browbeat Tuesday by President Gloria over the phone.

The poor guy said the 859 Princess of the Stars was allowed to sail despite a typhoon signal #1 in that time called for the raising of signal No. 3—because a ship its size could withstand a storm.

The ship sank because its engines crashed out and were left at the mercy of waves "as tall as buildings."

If the ship didn't develop engine trouble, it could easily have skirted through the waves.

Two other big ships that left Manila almost at the same time as Princess of the Stars arrived at their ports of destination.

Manila spreads welcome mat for founding day fest

By Allison W. Lopez

FAMILIES ENJOYING THE NONPAREIL holiday today in Manila can enter the Manila Zoo for free today at 7 a.m. as part of the 105th yr. Manila festivities marking the city's 457th founding anniversary.

Around 700 kinds of animals may be seen at the zoo, including tigers, snakes, zebras, and Mali the elephant, its main attraction. A horse-riding facility was recently built in the area for visitors.

A contest for photographic and painting enthusiasts will also be held around 2 p.m.

Prominent businessmen and government leaders, meanwhile, make up the roster of this year's Ten Outstanding Manilans, the celebration's culminating event. Mayor Alfredo Lim will lead the awarding ceremony at the Manila Hotel at 6 p.m.

This year's Outstanding Manilans are Isidro Ablaza, for entrepreneurship; Ramon Hupeney Jr., government service; Antonio Ang, business and industry; Manny Pangilinan, corporate leadership and management; Justice Arturo Brion, Supreme Court; Chief Justice Reynato Puno, law and social justice; Eduardo "Dinding" Quisumbing, diplomacy; and Yenie Sy-Coson and Emilio Yap, entrepreneurial leadership.

Mayor Lim and Fernando Poe Jr., a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, will receive a posthumous award.

A 10-minute fireworks display will then light up the skies outside the hotel at 8 p.m.

Lim urged everyone, especially the city's residents, to get involved in the festivities for Manila Day.

"I'm inviting everyone to celebrate Manila Day. I'm requesting all residents to help clean and fix their areas because this is where we live and grow up. We should take pride in our very own," he said.

Cops hold supermart murders suspect

THE SUSPECTED KILLER OF THREE supermarket employees of a Parañaque branch along Sucat Boulevard is already in the custody of the Mandaluyong City Police.

Mayor Benhur Abalos said the suspect was yesterday that Reynaldo "Bending, a store-boss or supervisor, who was rumored to have shot him dead, one day after the murders, ordered to killing the three victims.

"We have his admission on video tape," said Abalos, adding that he had explained to "Bending his rights before his confession.

The suspect in the killing of two managers, Medmar Reyes and Jessa Miranda, and Richard Feliciano, a maintenance man, told Abalos he was irked when the two managers scolded him for failing to report that water had seeped inside the supermarket because of the heavy rains over the weekend.

Task force Patrogold, which was formed by Abalos after the June 21 [illegible] had confirmed the following up operations and apprehended "Bending at his residence in Tondo, Manila.

Mandaluyong police chief Senior Supt. Carlos de Jesus said "Bending also took with him about P4,000 in cash from the supermart as he was in a dire need of money to pay for his [illegible] but confessed to the killings, was set to eject him from the house he was renting.

De Jesus said they also seize, and the gun finding allegedly used to kill the victims in Cavite province, where the murderous suspect hail is.

HANDCUFFED Mayor Benhur Abalos examines the gun allegedly used by Reynaldo "Bending (in white T-shirt), suspect in the Parkgold killings.

By Beverly T. Mahinlidad

METRO
Citizen's Call
Your Step of Attention and Excellence is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.
- Did a signage make your day?
- Did any employee go over-and-above your call?
- Are you up to arms against the commission of an unlawful deed?
- Need to a little known barangay project with a big positive impact to you?
- Got stuck in gridlock?
- Fed up with roaming and fending neighbors?
- Is there an emerging role model in your neighborhood?
- Insight/observation from on your way to work?
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INQUIRER

METROBRIEFS

2 men nabbed for rigging ATM

TWO MEN suspected of tampering with an automated teller machine were arrested by police in Binondo, Manila, the other day. Supt. Nelson Yabut of the Manila Police District Station 11 said Bobby Tiño, 20, and Edwin Cleto, 38, both residents of Phase II, Pabiparan III, Dasmariñas, Cavite, were nabbed at around 2 p.m. at the Bank of Philippine Island branch at the corner of Ilang-Ilang and Lemuel Streets in Binondo. The two were arrested based on the complaint of Ireneo Tagoloy, 34, a resident of Quezon City and Real Pagsanjan, SPI's ATM monitoring head. Tagoloy filed a complaint after the ATM did not dispense the P2,000 he was withdrawing from the machine. The bank management started monitoring the ATM and called up the police when they noticed the suspects hovering near the bank. The two were later confronted after they had tampered with the machine and left. One of the suspects had part glue, said managed to "trap" the money inside the machine, long enough to make the customer think that the ATM was malfunctioning. After the customer left, the suspects retrieved the money dispensed by the machine.

Allison W. Lopez

Azcuna to keynote symposium

THE SAN BEDA MOOT Court College of Law will hold a writ of habeas data symposium tomorrow, June 26, from 1 to 7 p.m. at the San Sebastian Gen Services Center on Recto Ave., Manila. The keynote speaker will be Supreme Court Associate Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna. The writ of habeas data is a legal doctrine which aims to protect the constitutional rights of a person to freedom of information, democracy's link. Interested parties may contact Law Executive Council secretary Marion Wirtz at (632) 8338431 or (632) 7211405.

Brother Ocampo is Inquirer Read-Along guest

BROTHER, novelist and multimedia artist Brother Ocampo will be the celebrity reader of the lesson in Read-Along session to be held on Saturday, June 28. An Aklatang Bayan storyteller will also read a story on the value of education and caring for the environment. Aside from presenting the lights of children through his fellowship moving Digital Superstition (KIDS) Foundation Inc., Ocampo is an active supporter of the Greenpeace campaign to stop climate change. The read-along will be held at 10 a.m. at the lessons building on Shaw Roses Avenue, Makati City. Interested participants may contact Ellen Esguerra and Gerie Ferrer at 897-8000 loc. 3319. Reservations will be on a first come, first served basis.

QC councilor bats for new overpass

By Marlon Ramos

A QUEZON CITY COUNCILOR HAS asked the owners of two big malls on North Avenue to build a pedestrian overpass between their establishments to ease traffic in the area.

In a proposed ordinance, Bernadette Herrera-Dy of the city's first district called on Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and SM Prime Holdings (SMPH), owner and operator of Trinoma and SM City North Edsa, respectively, to construct a walkway connecting their establishments for pedestrians.

She said the structure would reduce traffic in the area as mall goers would be able to use both shopping centers without passing on North Avenue.

"The city government encourages the construction of private structures to the development of Quezon City. Being among the city's biggest taxpayers, [ALI and SMPH] have a big role to play in the development of the city," she added.

Dy said the mall operators should also share the costs for maintaining the overpass as well as the workers who will guard the structure.

Zimbabwe opposition leader quits runoff

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH Africa—The leader of Zimbabwe's opposition party withdrew Sunday from a presidential runoff just five days before it was to be held, saying he could neither participate "in this violent, illegitimate sham of an election process," nor ask his voters to risk their lives in the face of threats from forces backing President Robert Mugabe.

The opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change, said his party was facing a war rather than an election, "and we will not be part of that war."

A governing party militia shielded his supporters from attending a major rally in Harare, the capital, on Sunday, an election-monitor team said. The opposition said rowdy youths, armed with iron bars and sticks, beat up people who had come to cheer for Tsvangirai.

It was the latest incident in a bloodstained campaign season in which Tsvangirai has been repeatedly detained, his party's chief strategist jailed on treason charges that many people considered bogus, and state-sponsored violence has left at least 86 opposition supporters dead and thousands injured, according to tallies by doctors treating the victims.

Tsvangirai's decision to quit the race points up the growing cracks in the solidarity that African heads of state have shown for Mugabe, an 84-year-old liberation hero whose anti-Western rhetoric has long struck a resonant chord in a region with a bitter colonial history.

The United States and Britain are pressing to put Zimbabwe's political crisis on the UN Security Council agenda on Monday, a step South Africa, the region's most powerful nation, has consistently opposed.

It remains to be seen whether southern Africa's leaders will censure Mugabe or take tougher steps, such as economic sanctions. They have moved done on Sunday, despite elections in 2002 and 2005 that were widely believed to have been marked by rigging and fraud, but that his regional peers declared legitimate. AFP

TSVANGIRAI

Flying doctors live the legend in Aussie outback

By Lawrence Bartlett

LIGHTNING RIDGE, AUSTRALIA—The eyesight of some of the grizzled opal miners in this outback outpost is failing, but relief is on the way: Australia's legendary flying doctors may not still spot the flash of color that could finally make them rich.

Flying years after its first lit plane took off on May 17, 1928, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is more legend than reality in many parts of the continent's remote outposts.

Geoffrey McFadden drives a beat-up pick-up from the railway carriage he calls home, stranded among dumps of broken rock dreams, to consult his eye specialist by video from Sydney to a floodboat Super Ranger.

"How are your eyes?" asks optical ophthalmologist Michael Hennessy.

Leaning forward, the 72-year-old miner delivers the laconic reply: "Well, it's not too bad."

He's had a cataract removed and intraocular eye glaucoma, but on the way back home McFadden almost ends a devil-may-care motorbaloney down a dirt track through rain-bleached grass, opera pits and dusty Mendo mine dumps.

"It's the best life out here," he says, explaining why he has spent the past 23 years rummaging through the land's pale rock for the stunning world-colored opalescent beauty occasionally hidden within.

"It's the freedom. There's no one do what you like. It's a lovelife."

But like everybody else in Lightning Ridge, some 730 km northwest of Sydney, the Silvery-loving "backtrack" acknowledges the vital role played by the flying doctors from the big city.

"They're a necessity, top class, one of the greatest organizations Australia has got," he says.

Back in Lightning Ridge, Hennessy and his five-strong team are seeing the last of the 55 or so patients they deal with on each of about six trips a year to the outpost, which has no resident eye specialist.

"This is close to a hundred visits I've done over 12 years," says Hennessy, who has a private practice in Sydney and is a consultant at the city's Prince of Wales Hospital.

"Patients are very appreciative (so the whole that we come out here so that's satisfying in itself, it makes the effort to get here worthwhile."

The Royal Flying Doctor Service, an iconic image of Australia internationally, provides both emergency medical aid and a comprehensive health care service to the people of the outback.

The not-for-profit service, which depends on donations to augment government grants, says it was the world's first aerial medical organization and remains unique for its range of services and the huge area covered.

Last year, its 47 aircraft flew an average of more than 10,000 km a day over an area of more than seven million sq km and attended nearly a quarter of a million patients.

"The flying doctors make an incredible difference to this town," says Marianne Webb, the administrative officer at the Lightning Ridge community health centre. "If we didn't have them we wouldn't have any specialists."

While the official population of the area might be "several thousand or less" she suggests there are a few thousand more who don't really want to be counted.

"To think there'd be a few people who just come here and sort of disappear. There'd be quite a few isolation types, it's easier here to hide out."

Many of the miners are from places in Australia, such Tasmania and East Europeans prominent, says Webb.

"I think there's something like 77 nationalities here. I promise they were attracted by the opals and they end up staying.

"The Hungarian's good. The bearded fellow next to you at the bar could be a millionaire, but there's no class difference and everybody's welcome."

At the flying doctors' fly-in/fly-out clinic in Lightning Ridge and dusk drifts over the scarred earth below, pilot Graham Barrowman sets course for Sydney and describes how much he loves his job.

"You can't save the world doing it, but you can do your little bit. For all of the years I've been the place I wanted to be since I was a young bloke learning to fly and now the flying doctor planes coming to the airport when I was training.

"I'm finest for the wealthy in the past," says the 42-year-old's former charter pilot, "but there's not the same satisfaction." AFP

UNDATED photo shows the Royal Flying Doctor Service performing dental surgery in the Australian outback.

Thai PM faces no-confidence motion, more street protests

BANGKOK, THAILAND—THAILAND'S prime minister fought for his political survival Monday as opponents began a no-confidence debate in Parliament and thousands of protesters continued to besiege his office.

The opposition Democrat Party brought the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej amid his Cabinet in the wake of four weeks of street protests calling for the government's resignation, and the debate opened debate on the measure Monday.

Demonstrators, led by activists of the People's Alliance for Democracy, have peacefully occupied this area around Government House, the seat of Thailand's government, since breaking through a police cordon Friday.

The protesters accuse Samak's five-month old government of being a puppet of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra who was ousted in a 2006 military coup, and accuse Thaksin of wanting to abolish Thailand's revered monarchy.

Samak strongly denied those allegations as he went before lawmakers Monday to the Senate, saying that only an "insane prime minister" would step down in the face of such accusations.

He said it was impossible for anyone, including Thaksin, to plan for abolishing Thailand's constitutional monarchy and turning the country into a republic.

The Senate will not vote on the no-confidence motion, but the more powerful lower house of Parliament will take up the motion Tuesday and vote on the measure Thursday.

"The senators will expose the wrongdoing of this government to make the public aware of it's the government has lost legitimacy in running the country," Somkiat Sawangkiree, one of 36 senators to grill the government, told The Associated Press.

In a nationwide address on state television Sunday, the embattled prime minister said he would resign if the vote went against him. AP

Google has best reputation in US, survey finds

BOSTON—GOOGLE INC.'S PERmits employees perks—from providing "free food" for a quick workday to letting them volunteering together—to keep 20 percent of their work time on side projects that may spark new ideas—have given the Internet leader the best reputation in corporate America, according to a study released by Harris Interactive Inc. on Monday.

Google's famous mantra is "don't be evil."

The online industry suffered from a perception of treating both the public and its employees poorly, Frank said. The percentage of respondents who are saying toward it was favorable fell to 25 percent from 31 percent last year, the sharpest drop of any of the 11 industries measured.

The poll, saying the reputations of 60 top US companies and corporate America at large, was conducted in two waves.

Harris selected the 60 companies in July and August, when a sample of 2,105 Americans to assess his impression that stood out in their minds by having very positive or very negative opinions.

Then in February and March, pollsters turned to 20,477 respondents who rated the 60 companies on 20 attributes, including emotional appeal, the quality of their products and social responsibility.

In addition, the company polled respondents on various industries.

The bulk of the list is consumer products companies and tech companies, with workers more likely to nominate the former and miss the latter.

Rounding out the top 10, from second to tenth, were health-care company Johnson & Johnson, chocolate-bar Corp., food companies General Mills Inc. and Kraft Foods Inc., Warren Buffet's investments and insurance enterprise Berkshire Hathaway Inc., diversified manufacturer 3M Co., soft-drink giant Coca-Cola Co. and Japanese automaker Honda Motor Co.

Financial services companies make up a relatively small piece of the list, with just Wells Fargo & Co., closely followed by Intel Insurance, Allstate Corp. and Bank of America Corp. representing the sector.

"We have never found the industry hostile to really be top of mind among the general public," Frank said.

Reputation is important in all sectors, he noted, with respondents saying they were more likely to buy products from, invest in or welcome into their communities companies that enjoy a favorable.

The five companies with the worst reputations, according to the study, were oilfield services company Halliburton Co., Wisconsin-owned oil company Citgo, Wall Street bailout, oil giant Exxon Mobil Corp. and top US cable company Comcast Corp. Reuters

The 10 best-liked companies

GOOGLE INC. NOW HAS THE best reputation in corporate America, according to a poll by Harris Interactive released on Monday.

The Web search company displaced Microsoft Corp. in the No. 1 spot, while the maker of Windows software fell to 18th place. Chipmaker Intel Corp., food company Kraft—which Google's owns factored into the top 60 last year—Warren Buffett's investment company Berkshire Hathaway Inc. and Japanese automaker Honda Motor Co. all found their way into the top 10, the Harris Interactive Reputation Quotient survey found.

Below is a list of the top 10 best-known US companies by reputation, followed by their rank in last year's survey:

1. Google	4
2. Johnson & Johnson	3
3. Intel	18
4. General Mills Inc.	6
5. Kraft Foods Inc.	not listed
6. Berkshire Hathaway	21
7. 3M Co.	2
8. Coca-Cola Co.	5
9. Honda	14
10. Microsoft	1

DURABLE MANDELA AT 90
Former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela arrives at a Hyde Park London on June 27. Mandela is in London for a week of events to celebrate his 90th birthday, including an outdoor concert in his honor at Hyde Park.

LESBIANS IN US MILITARY
'Don't ask, don't tell' hits women much more

WASHINGTON—THE MEN and Air Force discharged a disproportionate number of women in 2007 under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prohibits openly gay people from serving in the military, according to Pentagon statistics gathered by an advocacy group.

Females accounted for 14 percent of Army personnel, 40 percent of those discharged under the policy last year were women. And while 20 percent of Air Force personnel are women, 49 percent of its discharges under the policy last year were women.

By comparison for 2006, about 26 percent of the Army's discharges and 36 percent of the Air Force's were women, according to the statistics.

The information was gathered under a Freedom of Information Act request by the service members Legal Defense Network, a policy advocacy organization.

"Women make up 15 percent of the armed forces, so to find they represent nearly 50 percent of Army and Air Force discharges under 'don't ask, don't tell' is shocking," said Aubrey Sarvis, the organization's executive director. "Women in particular have been caught in the crosshairs of this counterproductive law."

The organization compiled gender statistics on the discharges, but conducted no formal set of interviews and thus could offer no verifiable reasons for the increase to women as opposed to men. A spokesman for the military under "don't ask, don't tell."

The Pentagon in recent days released overall numbers of discharges under the policy for 2007, without a breakdown by gender.

Overall, the number of gay men and lesbians discharged from the military in 2007 rose to 627 from 612 a year before, according to Pentagon statistics. Those figures represent a drop of about 10 percent from a peak in 2001, before the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

November was the 14th anniversary of the legislation that allows gay men and lesbians to serve in the military, but only if they keep their sexual orientation secret.

Advocacy groups say that 65,000 gay men and lesbians serve in the US armed forces and that there are more than 1 million gay veterans.

According to the statistics, the Army in 2007 discharged 261 soldiers under the policy, up from 240 the year before. The Air Force discharged 91 people, down from 102 in 2006. The Navy discharged 71, the same as in 2006. The Marine Corps discharged 68, up from 64 in 2006.

Pentagon officials could not explain why the numbers for women spiked last year. AFP

The WORLD

Edior Lawrence B. Quirez

21st female suicide attack in Iraq kills 15

BAGHDAD—A FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBER CONCEALING explosives beneath her black robe struck outside a government complex northeast of Baghdad, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 40, US and Iraqi officials said.

It was the 21st suicide mission carried out by a woman in Iraq this year, the US military said, as al-Qaeda and other Sunni militant groups try to regroup from major losses suffered at the hands of US and Iraqi forces.

The blast occurred about 1 p.m. Sunday as dozens of people were lining a roadside checkpoint that includes a courthouse and the provincial governor's office in Baquba, capital of Diyala province and a former al-Qaeda in Iraq stronghold 56 kilometers northeast of Baghdad.

A car bomb across the street from the same compound killed at least 40 people in April.

It appeared that the latest attack was timed to maximize casualties since many people were leaving the compound because the government offices there were to close soon for the day.

A US military statement said the dead included seven Iraqi police and eight civilians. Ten police were among the wounded. Iraqi authorities said 15 people were killed and 43 wounded.

"I was trying to leave the court when the explosion took place," said one witness, who was wounded by shrapnel but refused to give his name because of fears for his own safety.

"I heard some of the injured people saying they saw a woman wearing a black robe blow herself up."

Al-Qaeda has been increasingly using women because their black, billowing abaya robes easily conceal explosives. Iraqi police often lack enough policewomen to search women carefully.

The number of female suicide attacks has risen from eight in 2007 to 21 so far this year, according to US military figures. Eight of the attacks were in Diyala province.

Last year, US soldiers regained control of Baquba, which had been declared the capital of the Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaeda front organization. But the terror movement has been trying to regroup in the Kurdish Diyala province, which extends from the Iranian border to the eastern outer of Baghdad.

Earlier today, a roadside bomb Sunday apparently targeting a police patrol struck a civilian vehicle instead, killing four people, near Khirak, police reported. A suicide car bomber attacked a police checkpoint Sunday in the northwestern city of Mosul, wounding 14 people, including four policemen, provincial police said.

The violence occurred as US and Iraqi authorities are trying to meet a July target date for completing a security agreement that would allow American troops to remain in the country after the UN mandate expires at the end of this year.

Talks bogged down over several key issues, which Iraqi lawmakers said reduced the nation's sovereignty. Last week, however, Iraqi authorities said progress for a deal had brightened after the Americans submitted new, unspecified proposals. AP

INSPIT Locals line in near the peaks surrounding Mount Everest, over from Everest Base Camp in Nepalese photo taken May 24, 2003. —

China plans major Everest cleanup, may limit climbers

BEIJING—CHINA WANTS TO REDUCE the number of climbers on Mount Everest in a bid to protect the harsh but fragile environment on the world's highest mountain, state media said Monday.

New legislation could be introduced to control the number of visitors, the experts said in the wake of long-standing concerns over climbers and other visitors polluting the mountain with hard-to-clear rubbish and waste.

"We need to limit the number of people who want to climb Mount Everest, who exert a negative impact on the environment," Zhang Yongze, the director of Tibet's Bureau of Environmental Protection, told the Xinhua news agency.

"We will also need to strengthen management of commercial activities involving [the mountain]," he said in an interview. "We don't want so many visitors to diminish the peak."

AFP could not reach the bureau for comment Monday, but the China Daily said Zhang had suggested new laws could be introduced to restrict visitor numbers on the Chinese side of the mountain, which straddles the border with Nepal.

Authorities also intend to remove rubbish from Everest's slopes in the first half of next year, Zhang told Xinhua. Everest is vulnerable to littering as very little of what climbers leave behind decomposes in the cold environment.

"We have the responsibility to ensure that every drop of water flowing out of Mount Qomolangma into rivers and streams is clean," Zhang said, referring to Everest by its Tibetan name.

Soaring Everest has become big business and more than 2,000 people have so far succeeded in reaching the 8,848-meter peak. Many more visit the area around Everest without making it all the way to the summit.

More than 40,000 tourists visited last year on the Tibetan side, bringing behind 120 tons of trash, the China Daily reported. But they were a fraction of the number visiting the Nepali side each year, according to the paper.

Campaigns to pick up the huge amounts of garbage left by visitors and climbers have been going on since 1992.

Last year, a team led by Japanese mountaineer Ken Noguchi collected about 800 kilograms of rubbish—including tins, old tents, food and medicines—during an annual cleanup at the world's highest peak. AFP

Networks accused of putting wars on back burner

FIVE YEARS INTO THE WAR IN Iraq and nearly seven years into the war in Afghanistan, getting news of the conflicts into television is harder than ever.

According to data compiled by media watchdog Tyndall, a television surveillance who examines the three network evening newscasts, coverage of Iraq has been "massively scaled back this year."

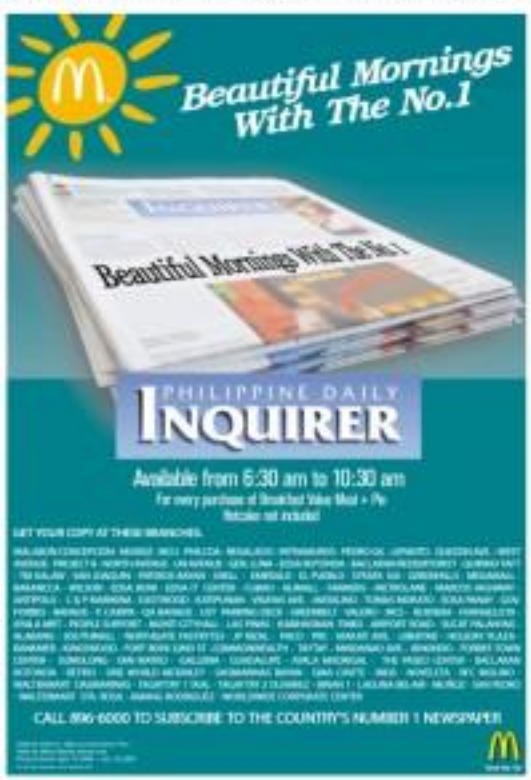
Almost halfway into 2008, the three newscasts have shown 161 weekday minutes of Iraq coverage, compared with 1,137 minutes for all of 2007. The "CBS Evening News" has devoted the fewest minutes to Iraq, 51, versus 55 minutes on ABC's "World News" and 55 minutes on NBC Nightly News." (The average evening newscast is 22 minutes long.)

CBS News no longer stations a single full-time correspondent in Iraq, where some 150,000 US troops are deployed.

In a telephone interview last week, Lara Logan, the chief foreign correspondent for CBS News, said the CBS News bureau in Baghdad was "drastically downsized" in the spring. The network now keeps a producer in the country, walking in lots of a bureau and none of an office.

Terry McCarthy, an ABC News correspondent in Baghdad, said he was not as busy as he was a year ago. A decline in the relative amount of violence "is taking the urgency out" of some of the coverage, he said. Still, he gets on ABC's "World News" and other programs with stories, including one on Friday about American gains in northern Iraq.

Coverage of the war in Afghanistan has increased slightly this year, with 46 minutes of total coverage — year-to-date — compared with 83 minutes for all of 2007. NYT



Years later, climatologist renews his call for action

TWENTY YEARS AGO ON MONDAY, DR. James E. Hansen, a climate scientist at Nasa, shook Washington and the world by telling a steaming-in-mid at a Senate hearing that the long-term trend was clear: the wave "99 percent" certain that humans were already warming the climate.

"The greenhouse effect has been detected, and it is changing our climate now," Hansen said then, referring in a stone string of warm years and the accumulating blanket of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and other gases released mainly by burning fossil fuels and forests.

To many observers of environmental history that was the first time global warming moved from being a looming future to breaking news. Hansen's statement helped propel the first modern legislation and an international treaty to cut emissions of greenhouse gases. A treaty was enacted and an addendum, the Kyoto Protocol, was added.

Even as the scientific picture of a human-heated world has solidified, remissions of the gases continue to rise.

On Monday Hansen, 67, plans to testify at a House committee hearing that it is all more, but not quite, too late to start defusing what he calls the "global warming time bomb." He will offer a prescription for cuts to emissions and also a warning about the risks of further inaction.

"If we don't begin to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next several years, and really on a very different course, then we are in trouble," Hansen said Friday at Nasa's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York, which he has directed since 1981. "Then the ice sheets are in trouble. Many species on the planet are in trouble."

In his testimony, Hansen said, he will say that the new presidential term is a unique opportunity to galvanize the country around the need for a transformed, nonpolluting energy system. The hearing is before the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Many climate experts say Hansen, despite some barbs, has been an essential prodder of the public and scientific consensus.

Jerry Mahlman, who recently retired from a long career in climatology, said he disagreed with some of Hansen's characterizations of the climate problem and his ideas about solutions. "On the whole, though, he's been helpful," Mahlman said. "He pushes the edge, but most of the time it's pedagogically sound." NYT

Iran to give 'devastating' response to any attack

TEHRAN—IRAN WILL GIVE A "DEVASTATING" response to any attack on the country, its defense minister said on Sunday.

The New York Times on Friday quoted US officials as saying Israel had carried out a large military exercise, apparently a rehearsal for a potential bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities.

Iran's Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Najjar said the Israeli exercise was part of "psychological warfare" against Iran.

Iran had never initiated conflict but would react to "all means available" if it was attacked. "Iran will come up with a devastating ... response without any time limit to any hostile measure against our country," Najjar said.

Western powers suspect Tehran is seeking to develop nuclear bombs. Israel has described Iran's nuclear program as a threat to its existence.

Earlier this month, Israeli Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz said an Israeli newspaper an attack on Iran looked "unavoidable" given the apparent failure of United Nations sanctions to deter Tehran technology with bomb-making potential.

Israel bombed an Iraqi reactor in 1981 and an Israeli air raid on Syria last September razed what the United States said was a nascent nuclear reactor built with North Korean help. Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Spain knocks out Italy, makes semis /A28

SPORTS
Editor Tobbric S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

44 days to the 29th Summer Olympics

Cautious Pacquiao will try to KO Diaz

By Ron Luarca

HOLLYWOOD—THERE'S NO GUARANTEE OF a knockout.

The most Manny Pacquiao can assure his fans is he'll go for it when he tangles with defending champion David Diaz for the World Boxing Council lightweight crown on June 28 in Las Vegas.

"All boxers want to win by knockout, and both of us will try to do that. But it's hard to tell what will happen," Pacquiao told Manila-based sportswriters in Filipino in his visit at the gated Palazzo apartment here.

"I will try to win by KO to give the best show to my people."

Pacquiao provided plenty of action, though, in the bout dubbed Lethal Combination at the Mandalay Bay Events Center.

He lost newly cut and his opponent trimmed. Pacquiao said he's not worried in his first outing in the 130-pound division.

"I have big apertures and it's heavier than that (130) when I fight," he said.

After weighing in at 129 lb, Pacquiao ballooned to 143 when he wrested the WBC super featherweight crown from Juan Manuel Marquez on March 15.

Though he's not thinking of losing, Pacquiao said he won't make any excuses in the event of such an upset.

Goldenboys have installed the Filipino superstar a 4-1 favorite to beat Diaz and become the only Asian to win four world titles in different divisions.

The 29-year-old Pacquiao also held the WBC flyweight title in 1998 and the International Boxing Federation super bantam belt in 2003.

Pacquiao also dismissed the notion that Diaz will be an easy conquest based on the way he beat Frances Mckenzie, a spectator of Pacquiao, by decision in the undercard of Pacquiao-Marquez II.

"I'm sure he'll be in better shape this time," said Pacquiao. "He just didn't take Mckenzie seriously. But (Diaz coach) Freddie, fighting is my business and I want us to be in the best shape each time I fight."

With his weight in check at 135 and feeling fine, Pacquiao—given the go-signal by chief trainer Freddie Roach to take a break...opted to jog around the La Brea park before boxing mass at the Christ the King church.

After eating lunch, Pacquiao eased his chore hours and then relished the time away playing a friendly card game and darts.

Feeling hungry at around 6 p.m., he finished a sandwich before hobnobbing with visitors.

It will be a busy Monday for Pacquiao. After winding up his training at the Wild Card Gym with four rounds of sparring, he proceeds to Santa Monica pier for a joint press luncheon conference with Diaz.

Peculiar, then, Santa Pacquiao will take the four-hour drive to Las Vegas, arriving just before sunset in the city of lights.

A NEW LOOK Manny Pacquiao shows his primary weapon against Diaz.

Diaz relishes underdog role

By Ron Luarca

HOLLYWOOD—DAVID DIAZ knows he's in for a tough fight against Manny Pacquiao, but he isn't about to let it consume his sleep.

"You have to have fun," Diaz told Steve Carp of the Las Vegas Review-Journal on Monday. "But it's not telling anything before me or distract me. I know what I have to do on Saturday."

Diaz was referring to his defense of the World Boxing Council lightweight title against his super featherweight counterpart on June 28 in Las Vegas.

"You can't let the fight consume you," Diaz said. "I can clear it off pretty quick and turn it back on when I have to."

Relishing his new-found celebrity status, Diaz was able to master in his home training school in the 2008 Gym in Chicago guest appearances in the games of the Chicago Cubs and the Chicago Bears.

The 22-year-old Diaz, who resided in Los Angeles by plane from Chicago Sunday night, even granted the announcement a particular of his grade school class.

Having experienced playing second fiddle to Erik Morales, whom he lost via a 12-round decision last year, Diaz doesn't mind assuming the same role again against Pacquiao, acknowledged as the world's No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter.

"I've been through this before," Diaz said. "When I fought Morales, nobody thought I could win. But I feel good and relaxed. That's a good sign."

Like Pacquiao, Diaz is an ardent sport fan, rooting for his home team Cubs (baseball), Bears (football), the Bulls (basketball) and the Blackhawks (hockey).

"It's a huge sports fan, anything Chicago," Diaz said.

A son of Mexican immigrants who was born and raised in Chicago, Diaz said the Mexicans are looking at him as their last hope to get back at Pacquiao, tagged as the "Mexican assassin" for beating their best fighters like Morales 3 (once to draw once) Marco Antonio Barrera (twice) and Marquez (one win and one draw).

DIAZ: Feeling good, relaxed

Boxing Herald analysis: Four possible scenarios on fight night / A22

Taiwanese star Wu nips Bañares

By Hsiang R. Castillo

FORMER WORLD 9-BALL CHAMPION WU CHIH-CHENG OF TAIWAN FIGured from a chair-rack deficit to turn back Filipinos Antonio Bañares, 13-9, late Sunday to seal rules One Puerto Princesa Mayor's Cup 10-Ball championship.

The 39-year-old Taiwanese star used precise potting and power breaking to get back into contention and then came up with a spin of a safety play to the 3rd frame to secure the win, worth $10,000, over the Bañares, the steel team sensation, at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum.

"I had another tough time," Wu, who also reigned as World 8-Ball champion once, said through an interpreter.

"I made the most of every opportunity I got. I was also lucky."

Wu trailed 2-6 and 4-7 before winning the next six racks and taking the full race for 10-year-old Bañares, the reigning Philippine junior champ who reached the semifinals of the Philippine Pool Tour's first leg in Mandaluyong last month.

Bañares, who ousted Mandaluyong representing Marlon Manalo, 9-8, in the semifinals also Sunday, had a chance to force the event at 10 after dropping two balls with his break on the 20th rack.

But the shaky Filipino didn't have a shot on the nine-2 and played a bad safety. Wu's brilliant safety left Bañares no chance but to attempt a shot on No. 6 which failed to a scratch.

Wu pocketed the lion's share of the $30,000 kitty and secured an automatic slot in the first-ever World 10-Ball slated in Manila in September.

Bañares settled for the $6,000 runner-up prize, while Manalo and Ball Sweeper, whom Wu defeated in their Final Four encounter, 9-6, also Sunday, were home with $2,000.

The Bodging PPT will also have stops in Cebu and Pasay City, which will undercut the meth's million peso World 10-ball title.

Wu was among a bevy of superstar foreigners in the Puerto Princesa event along with countrymate Ko Pin-yi, the reigning world junior champion, and Cambodia Tour standout Chang Chung-ta, and Taiwanese Thomson Kobayashi and Sosuyan.

The final 32-seat field was so tough that even Chinese No. 1 Li Hewen and women's champion Jia Li failed to advance past a two-day qualifier.

PACQUIAO VS DIAZ

Champ fights champ: Four possible scenarios

By Dan Leopoldo
(The Boxing Herald
(A Boxingheralds.com preview)

THE CLOCK IS TICKING CLOSER TO the "Cobra Combination" boxing event on Saturday at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Boxing fanatics around the world are very excited about the card's main event between 10-spins superstar Manny Pacquiao against the World Boxing Council lightweight champion David Diaz.

This is the Pacman's first crack in the lightweight division and there are a lot of possible scenarios that could play out. There are questions that need to be answered in this duel. Will Manny keep his knockout power at lightweight? Will he be slower? Will he be aggressive and shoot out with Diaz in the middle of the ring? Or will it be a tactical match like what happened in Pacquiao vs. Barrera II and Pacquiao vs. Marquez II?

Let us analyze the possible scenarios that could play out in this mega fight based on five factors—punching power, hand speed, accuracy, endurance and punch resistance.

MANNY Pacquiao's endowering factor is his dynamic hand speed.

DAVID Diaz, the heavier puncher, used to fight as a 140-pounder.

FIGHT SCENARIO No. 1

MANNY PACQUIAO:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (+)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

DAVID DIAZ:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (+)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

If that scenario plays out, it should prove to be a high-octane fight. With Manny's power, speed, accuracy, endurance and punch resistance up to par with the lightweight division, he should make a good account of himself.

Meanwhile, David Diaz should be carrying the heavier pounds, especially considering the fact that he used to fight as a light welterweight.

This is the best fight scenario from an ordinary fan's perspective, but it's highly unlikely. Something has got to give in this fight, so let us tackle the probable weaknesses of these fighters in other scenarios in succession.

EJECTOR: The fighter who dictates the tempo will win the fight.

FIGHT SCENARIO No. 2

MANNY PACQUIAO:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (+)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (-)

DAVID DIAZ:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (-)
3. Accuracy: (-)
4. Endurance: (-)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

This is the most probable scenario that's going to play out from this writer's perspective.

Not many consider the fact that Diaz was elevated his pay hooking career as a lanky 140-pounder. Now he has muscled up into the lightweight division. Something has got to give in his arsenal. His power should be diluted at this weight.

Diaz is not considered as a power puncher, but considering the fact that he used to fight as a light welterweight, he definitely carries a heavier punch than he's marched for. When he was fighting it should also and beat the Filipino icon. If Marquez can make Diemuah's legs wobble, I expect Diaz to be capable of doing the same thing, especially if he lands a stout punch.

The redeeming factor for Manny is that he still has his dynamic hand speed. It should empirise Diaz from time to time. A knockout is even possible if a sneaky left straight goes through the defense unnoticed.

X-FACTOR: Defense will be a decisive factor in this scenario. The fighter who gets hit on a regular basis will lose the contest in the later rounds.

FIGHT SCENARIO No. 3

MANNY PACQUIAO:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (-)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (-)

DAVID DIAZ:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (-)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

This is the second most likely scenario. But most fans are advertised as a fighter with below-average power, mediocre hand speed and a slugging style that lacks accurate punching. His only real advantage in this fight is to hope that Manny's chin won't hold up against the sheer weight of a bigger pugilist's volume punches.

Manny's power should prevent his opponent from coming forward and dictating the speed style. If he lands that left straight with authority, Diaz's knees should buckle and possibly go down for the count.

EJECTOR: If Manny lands that powerful left straight consistently in the matrix, a knockout is bound to happen. But if Diaz doubles up on defense, it would be a long night for the wreckers.

FIGHT SCENARIO No. 4

MANNY PACQUIAO:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (+)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

DAVID DIAZ:
1. Punching Power: (+)
2. Handspeed: (+)
3. Accuracy: (+)
4. Endurance: (+)
5. Punch Resistance: (+)

This is the scenario that most Filipinos fans should hope for. But I would still give a 1-in-the Punch Resistance category because of the uncertainty of fighting seven-division losers.

If the fighter doesn't overcome several of power, speed, accuracy and endurance remains, it should be a short night for his opponent. But if Manny decides to lose, then we will probably see a repetition of the Pacquiao vs. Barrera II.

EJECTOR: Being a natural lightweight, Diaz should match up very well against Manny in the hand speed category. This should prove to be an important factor if the fight goes to the scorecards.

(Dan Leopoldo is a respected fight analyst of the popular boxing website The Boxing Herald. The doingheralds.com mega-preview is called The Ultimate Breakdown. Pacquiao vs Diaz—Ed)

Cuban coach predicts a medal for Tañamor

By Jane Navarro

CUBAN COACH ENRIQUE STORER Tuesday is fearlessly counting on boxing hero Harry Tañamor to bring home a medal from the 2008 Beijing Olympics in August.

Tañamor's "natural" skills impresses every time he fights with boxers from other countries," said Tanero. "With all the attention given to him (Tañamor), there's no more reason for him not to win a medal."

Storer is one of two Cuban coaches hired by the Philippine Sports Commission to prepare Tañamor for Beijing and boost the development of the sport in the country.

Filipino boxers have captured five medals...two silvers and three bronzes—in the Olympics with Rhenante "Onyok" Alparo leading a silver in the same light flyweight (+48 kg) category as Tañamor during the 1996 Atlanta Games.

The Philippines went without a medal in the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and in the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Tañamor, who also fought in Athens, snared a silver in the 2007 world championships in Chicago to climb to Olympic duo. He arrow on to win the gold in the first Aiba Presidents Cup held in Taipei last month after beating Kazakh's Kokpay Zhanibek.

"You see, he's been improving," said Storer, who coached the Cuban national boxing team from 1990 to 2000.

"But he will need more exposure and more fights against other foreign boxers so he could reach peak form in the Olympics."

Tañamor will be fighting in a tough division that includes Cuban boxers and Americans, but Storer said his weight should prepare harder for China's Zhou Shiming, who defeated Tañamor in the finals of the world champs en route last year.

"He has the speed and the toughness to stick to you so clear that you couldn't throw a punch at all," Tañamor said of Zhou in his website. "I'm working on his (Shiming's) style."

Tañamor first climbing in a box for a tournament a few years back.

"I knew his style and he knows mine," said Tañamor.

HARRY Tañamor (right) battles China's Zou Shiming in the Chicago worlds. AFP/FILE

MVP Manny Chandemanigan is ready for commissioner Chip Sudhoff.

FIBL caging: Sharks dethrone Kings

HEAVYWEIGHT BLUE SHARKS PIPED defending champion Kings, 61-57, in overtime Sunday to register the 2008 FIBL Goodwill Cup championship at The Arena in San Juan.

The victory completed the Sharks' sweep of the Kings in their best-of-three series.

Back-to-back Most Valuable Player Manny Chandemanigan fired 16 of his team-high 22 points in the fourth quarter and extra period to power the Sharks over his former team.

"Manny was a big factor for this team," said winning coach Gabby Torres. "He just happy he's on our side."

Rookie of the line Ajeet Singh led the Kings but his effort fell short against the Sharks and Chandemanigan, who fed the go-ahead jumper and then scored a layup to make it 61-59, with only 22.3 seconds to go.

Center Fantodeep Brar backed Chandemanigan with 21 points and 13 rebounds. Mont Impound Player Rob Sudhoff added 11 points.

The Kings, bolstered by ajeet Singh with 20 points, led for the most part of the game and even built a 57-49 edge early in the fourth quarter.

Jumper sensationalist Dilip Sudhoff banded on the player assists before the game, led by Chandemanigan and Rookie of the Year, Mahesh Akshaui, Experience Kishore Mirpuri, Mohamad King and Jaspreet Dangerous, No. 1, in Blocked Shots.

Top scorers:
BLUE SHARKS (61)—Chandemanigan 16, Brar 13, Sudhoff 11, Akshaui 7, Dhaliwal 5, Dhaliwal 3, Mirpuri 2, Dangerous 2, Sandhu 2, Chandemanigan 2, Singh 2, Sudhoff 2, Dhaliwal 2, Dhaliwal 2.
KINGS (57)—A. Singh 20, J. Singh 12, Mahesh 8, Dangerous 6, Sandhu 5, Chandemanigan 4, Dangerous 4, Sandhu 3, Chandemanigan 2, Sudhoff 2, Dhaliwal 2, Dhaliwal 2.
Quarters: 9-18, 29-32, 49-44, 57-57.

SPORTSWATCH

Focus on Barral, UAAP host UP

TWO BIG SPORTS EVENTS IN JULY WILL BE the topic of discussion in the PSA Forum which resumes its weekly session today at the Dolidoy's UN Avenue branch.

World Olympian and SJ "Sunshine" Barral and manager Mitchell Mesquer will grace the sports program to talk about Barral's bid for the 2008 super flyweight title against Rafael Concepcion of Panama on July 20 at the Ninoy Aquino Coliseum.

University of the Philippines officials Rector Jose Dalisay Jr. chancellor Gerry Que and Board member Cathee Padilla will also be guests in the 1 hot session of the UAAP Basketball on July 6.

With them is the 10:30 am. session in Antonio Abadia, director Ricky Palou.

New derby sked in Makati

A NEW CHOICE OF EVENT SELLS AS THE ST. 4-Coach Derby starts June 30 at Makati Coliseum.

The PCL Classic and Advancement Corp. has dangled a P500,000 guaranteed prize, regardless of the number of entries. Derby fee is P11,000.

Likewise, the champion handler will receive P50,000 and the gaffer P10,000.

Meanwhile, a 4-stag derby will be held by the Manila Banyan Brothers and Jet and Jose Primavera on July 4 at the same venue.

GREEN LIGHT: Elvis John Pascual

'NC' relents, clears way for SBC's Pascual

By Cedrill P. Tupas

SAN JUAN – Pascual Jr. will be eligible to play for the San Beda College Red Cubs in the NCAA after the National Collegiate Athletic Association relented on its decision to bar the 6-foot-6 forward from playing for the Philippine Christian University Baby Dolphins in the 2006 season.

The NCAA management committee, policy board chair Reynaldo Vea of San Beda said the 6-foot-6 Pascual "did not knowingly violate NCAA rules" when he was active for the Philippine Christian University Baby Dolphins in the 2006 season.

"We cannot say that he (Pascual) knowingly violated NCAA rules," Vea said after emerging from a three-hour meeting at the SLU Building in Quezon City.

Pascual was declared ineligible but was soon able to "reinstate himself" after he established a fourth-year diploma from St. Anne Catholic School in Panabo, Davao.

But the player, in an affidavit, insisted that he was instructed by then PCU assistant coach Bong Sales to drop out of fourth year and enroll as a junior.

"He (Pascual) was an unknowing pawn in the unpleasant controversy," San Beda president Fr. Mateo De Jesus said in his June 10 appeal to the policy board.

Four other PCU players were found guilty of identity-switching and of falsification of public documents. The team had to its school's cooperation from the NCAA last year and the Baby Dolphins were stripped off the 2006 title.

Pascual's Most Valuable Player award was also returned to the NCAA.

Vea said the cases involving the four others from PCU players were "different."

Henry Angeles, who headed the fact-finding committee in the PCU case and represented St. Benilda in the policy board meeting, said, "There were too many violations in the four other cases, from misrepresentations and falsification of public documents."

San Beda coach Franklin Lim welcomed the decision of the policy board, which came five days before the Lions began their "three-peat" quest against the Mapua Cardinals in the Seniors Collegiate.

"We are very happy," Lim said. "Jake is in, so tournament is our championship bid."

Ambitious MVP plan for 2012 Olympics

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE BASKETBALL Federation of the Philippines Inc. will concentrate on the development of a comprehensive basketball program in pursuit of its goal to return to the Olympics in 2012 in London.

"It's a long-term process," said BAP-SBP president Manuel V. Pangilinan in an outreach interview during the launch of his Access team in the UAAP which he intended recently as a longtime supporter of the league.

"We're designing all of the programs to ensure we are qualify in 2012," added Pangilinan who recently named a little four-year term.

Aside from the formation of national teams, Pangilinan said the BAP-SBP will also focus on the development of programs for the technical officials.

"We will open the concentration is on the referees," he noted. "It's not just their accreditation, but the leveling. We have to make sure they have the proper training, proper skills and they know the standard way of refereeing. We'll also continue with the accreditation. All these skills reflect Philippine basketball."

Pangilinan, who had a preliminary discussion with new executive director Noli Eala last Friday, also identified the priority businessmen for the national men, women and youth teams.

"We have a good template," Pangilinan said of Eala's proposed calendar. "We're looking at the 9+ he mentioned tournaments. There's a process starting in the qualifying tournaments in 2009. So that means we should organize the younger players."

2007 Final 4 teams to beat

Lions, Knights, Bombers, Cardinals faves in 84th season

By Cedrill P. Tupas

THE NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT is back to a full cast of eight teams this year.

But if the coaches' predictions prove true, the same four squads that survived the eliminations last year would still be around when the league reaches the knockout phase.

Last year's losing finalist the Letran Knights, the Jose Rizal Heavy Bombers and the Mapua Cardinals have been tapped to contend the "three-peat" seeking San Beda Red Lions for top honors in the league's 84th season, which opens this Saturday at the Araneta Coliseum.

And the Lions' second-year mentor Frankie Lim is anticipating an even tougher time this season.

He added the improved San Sebastian Stags as the side stab, along with the returning Philippine Christian University Dolphins.

"The competition is very strong," said Lim, who guided the Lions to back-to-back championships as a rookie coach last year. "It's not going to be easy."

Lim said his banking this time on newly appointed skipper Borg Hondal and holdovers Ogie Menor, Nigerian Sam Ekwe, Ilam Gamalinda, Enrico Laurence and former PCU juniors' standout Elvis John Pascual, who was declared eligible to play by the league yesterday.

ALL FOR ONE NCAA coaches show their unity in posing for a pre-season press conference at the ABS-CBN Building in Quezon City. From left: Letran's Louie Alas, St. Benilda's Gin Alcantara, PCU's Joel Chualan, San Beda's Frankie Lim, Perpetual's Bal Cristobal, Mapua's Leo Isaac, San Sebastian's Jorge Gallent and JRU's Ariel Vanguardia.

Meanwhile, in a move that could greatly determine the outcome of games, the NCAA is introducing the "Challenge Rule" that allows coaches to contest if buzzer-beating shots at the end of the quarters are counted or not.

League commissioner Joe Lipa said that if the challenge is overruled, it will be charged to the challenging team's timeouts.

If there are no timeouts left, the team will be slapped with a technical foul, he added.

Another new rule, Lipa said, is that a player will now be charged with six "unsportsmanlike fouls" where he fouls an opposing player away from the ball before an inbound play.

Cebu, Pagadian Liga inaugural champions

CALVARIA DE OBO – MARC NEIL SHOWED HIS LEADership with a double-double performance as Pagadian United Baptist, 63-49, Sunday in the final of the maiden southern phase of Liga Filipina at Xavier University gym.

He finished with 13 points and 11 rebounds and was adjudged Most Player of the Mindanao Orientation.

The Pagadian Explorers controlled the boards, 43-36, and held the Victory, who trailed 17-7 at the start, to 20 percent shooting from the field (15-of-80). Pagadian's defense also forced 17 Baptist turnovers.

In the battle for third place, local boy title de la Cuesta outhauled 20 points as José dela Salle Meteors past the Team Laguna builders, 69-59.

Meanwhile, at the People's Coliseum in Sto. Domingo, Davao Del Sur, the Cebu Nikon showed the best Resemblance, 98-59, in the northern leg final.

Tagaig topped Quezon, 79-66, for third place.

The scores:

Final Game/Mindanao Leg:
PAGADIAN UNITED BAPTIST (63) – Cu 4, Cuesta 10, Sagarbarbi 11, Cuesta 11, Nuñez 15, Cuesta 6, Amoroso 7, Lamano 11, Lalamento 12, Delgarco 2, Sa. Alvarez 5, Nuñez 2, Nuñez 4, Sánchez 2, Bautista 2, Sa. Luis 2, Alpuerto 0, Bautista 0, Nuñez 0, Espino 0.
CALVARIA DE OBO – Dela 11, Montayre 9, Lanero 7, Manalo 0, Perez 7, Zarate 0, Lopez, Rojo 4, Cardenas 0, Wilkins 4, Rojas 2, Dela Cebrada 0, Bautista 0, Bautista 0.
Quarters: 9-16, 27-33, 43-49, 63-49
Second Game:
CEBU NIKON – Rodrigues 19, Dano 10, Sison 10, Capati 13, Padilla 6, Alvarez 1, Andrew 0, Cesar 2, Adadanga 7, Aring 0, Manuel 0, Andrews 0, Lapa 0.
DAVAO DEL SUR – Ramos 16, Bolilla 12, Alpay 3, Lopez 0, Dalida 7, Magsaysay 1, Lopez 0, Bañas 2, Lopez 0, Dalida 3

SPORTS

SPAIN'S Cesc Fabregas scores the winning penalty shot past Italy's Gianluigi Buffon (not in photo) during their quarterfinal match. AP

EURO 2008

Spain knocks out Italy, makes semis

VIENNA, AUSTRIA—GONE MUST BE hoping the shootout win over Italy that carried it into the European Championship semifinals is more proof that title-winning teams pick up victories even when they don't play well.

It's a thrilling finish to Sunday's form 20:00 match at Ernst Happel Stadium, first Cazilla saved penalties from Daniele De Rossi and Antonio Di Natale before Cesc Fabregas scored the winning kick to give Spain a 4-2 shootout victory over the World Cup champions.

But the finish was in stark contrast to the dull 0-0 draw that preceded it, with neither side exerting its potential.

"We deserved to win on penalty kicks," Spain coach Luis Aragones said. "We didn't play great football, but neither did Italy.

"The pace of the game was rather slow. If we'd had a little more pace on the ball, we'd have got more chances. We had three or four chances but our shooting wasn't quite there."

That's something Spain will have to work on if it's to compete with Russia when the teams meet in the semi-finals on Thursday.

Spain, the only one of the four group winners to reach the semifinals at Euro 2008, stunned Russia 4-1 in a group match, but the Russians have improved dramatically since then and one upset Sweden and then the Netherlands to reach the last four.

"We would be naive to think that because we already beat Russia 4-1 we will find it easy," Casillas said. "Being in a semifinal, whatever result went before does not matter it is a new match."

After an uninspiring 90 minutes, David Silva hit a shot just wide for Spain in extra time and Gli Natale had a header tipped over the bar by Casillas. Italy brought on Alessandro Del Piero in the 120th, but he continued caution suggested this was more for the shootout than for his ability to conjure a winning goal.

In the end, Del Piero didn't even get to take a kick.

"You have to feel ready to score a penalty," Italy coach Roberto Donadoni said. "Some of the players tell me they would rather not go first. I do not decide who takes kicks."

With key midfielders Andres Iniesta and Germano Gattuso suspended, Italy seemed keenly content to try and stifle a Spain team that had shown some of the best attacking football in the group stages.

"We're very bitter, but we still have a lot of pride," Gattuso said. "Losing on penalties happens. We won the World Cup on penalties."

Spain's best opportunity from open play had come in the 91st when Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon spilled a fierce long-range shot by Marcos Senna. The ball squirmed out of his hands and rolled back to hit the post before bouncing softly back in his arms.

And the first half had been no more than both sets of fans joined the teams off the field for the interval, with the most noise the heavily outnumbered Italians made coming when Antonio Cassano took a fifth-minute corner right in front of them.

The move that led to that chance was arguably the brightest spot in a unsatisfying first half. David Villa set up Silva with a lush-looked return pass to orchestrate that even retired French great Zinedine Zidane, who was watching from the stands, nodded in approval. AP

Clean air drive keeps gov't cars off Beijing

BEIJING—THE BEIJING CITY GOVernment said Monday it had ordered half of its cars off the road heading up to the Olympics for an early effort to clean up the air for the games and save energy.

Half of all government and Communist Party cars will not be used starting Monday until July 10, the city said in a notice on its website.

From July 20, another regulation kicks in that will allow vehicles on the road only on odd or even days, depending on their license plate numbers.

"To meet the air quality standards and to realize safe and smooth traffic to our solemn promise to the international community," the Beijing government notice said.

Nine sports venues and $40 billion spent to improve China's infrastructure have not dispelled the fact that Beijing's air quality remains a contentious issue for the games.

International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge had said outdoor endurance events lasting more than an hour will be postponed if air quality is poor.

Organizers announced details last week of a plan to pull half of Beijing's 3.3 million vehicles off the roads during the Olympics to help clean the city's emissions for the games.

The auto ban is part of an anti-pollution plan that also will halt construction and heavy industry during the Olympics, which begin in seven weeks.

In addition, 300,000 heavy polluting vehicles like aging industrial trucks will be banned starting July 1. AP

Federer underdog? Pete, Rafa disagree

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—BJORN Borg and Novak Djokovic say Roger Federer's reign at Wimbledon is in jeopardy. Pete Sampras and Rafael Nadal say Federer remains the man to beat on grass.

Federer prefers to let his tennis do the talking.

"It's maybe a time where some people talk a little bit too much," Federer said Sunday, a day before playing the first Centre Court match as he begins his pursuit of a sixth consecutive Wimbledon title.

That would equal the record established by William Renshaw, the champion in 1881-86. Since the early 1900s, Federer and Borg (1976-80) are the only men to win Wimbledon five times in a row. Federer's 59-match winning streak on grass is the longest in the 40-year Open era.

Yet there has been plenty of debate the past two weeks regarding whether Federer is this year's favorite. It seems everyone but old Willie Renshaw weighed in on the subject.

Nobody disputes the 26-year-old Federer has struggled to recent big cups in the clay courts events since early 2003, he has been beaten at two consecutive major tournaments. He has lost eight matches this year, only one less than in all of 2007. And he endured his most lopsided Grand Slam defeat in the French Open final two weeks ago, winning only four games against Nadal.

Ranked No. 1 since February 2004, Federer blames his slump this year on a winter bout with mononucleosis and says he feels fine now. He showed no signs of slippage when he moved to grass the week after the loss at Roland Garros, winning a warm-up tournament in Halle, Germany, without dropping his serve, much less a set.

That was against a weak field, however, and the title failed to squelch speculation Federer will soon be no co-champion in gentlemen's singles at the All England Club.

"I put the question, 'Can Roger win Wimbledon?'" said Andy Roddick, who lost to Federer in the 2004 and 2005 finals. "I found that to be one of the most ridiculous questions I've ever answered in my life. You know, he has won it five times. I'm not sure what else he has to do."

Federer's biggest nemesis disagrees. The No. 2-ranked Nadal is 11-6 against Federer, was runner-up at Wimbledon the past two years and pushed Federer to five sets in the 2007 final.

"He didn't lose a set in Halle—39 matches without losing. Come on," Nadal said.

"So great as Roger is, he's going to have his losses and his bad days," Sampras said. "When push comes in shove in the major, he's still the guy that's most likely to win them. He'll be just fine." AP

ROGER Federer at a press conference in Wimbledon.

Massa leads Ferrari's France GP sweep, seizes F1 lead

MAGNY COURS, FRANCE—FERRARI'S Felipe Massa won the French Grand Prix on Sunday in order F1's championship lead and continue an unlikely rise after a miserable start to the season.

The Brazilian driver overtook teammate Kimi Raikkonen just over the halfway mark and retained in a 17.9-second win that handed him a two-point advantage over BMW Sauber driver Robert Kubica in the overall points standings.

Massa is the fourth driver to lead Formula One this year and the first Brazilian since three-time world champion Ayrton Senna in 1993.

"We are still in the middle of the championship and we still have a lot of races to go so we cannot think differently than we would always think in area," the 27-year-old said after picking up his eighth career victory. "The need to take all of the opportunities we can to be to the front all of the time. It's always nice to lead the championship, hopefully we can stay in that position."

Massa, who has won three of six races since retiring from the first two, seized on Raikkonen's mechanical problem to overtake the pole sitter and confirm the Italian teams' rebound from poor races at Monaco and Montreal that robbed it of the early season momentum after four wins in the first five GPs.

Ferrari's eighth win at the Circuit de Bugatti in 12 races and second straight 1-2 sweep—Raikkonen won last year—cushioned the team's lead to the constructors' standings to 17 over BMW Sauber. Raikkonen took Massa to the podium in third. AP

FELIPE Massa celebrates.

Cink rules Travelers

CROMWELL, CONN.—STEWART CINK was well aware of his reputation of his inability to close out golf tournaments.

"I mean, guys like Tiger (Woods) and Phil (Mickelson), when they are in contention, they let it all out," Cink said Sunday after winning the Travelers Championship, only his second win after leading through 54 holes. "They don't think about the next one. They just go for it."

Cink, who started the day with a two-stroke lead over Heath Slocum following rounds of 66, 64 and 65, went for 8 Sunday. He held off late charges from Tommy Armour III and defending champion Bubba Watson, and shot a 2-under 67 to finish at 18 under. Armour (68) and Watson (62) tied for second. AP

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BIR seeks dismissal of 51 collectors

First casualties of lateral attrition law

By Michelle V. Rarus

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE HAS RECOMMENDED THE dismissal of 51 revenue district officers and their staff for falling short of their 2007 collection goals by more than what was allowed by the Lateral Attrition law.

The recommendation, signed by Internal Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti, has been submitted to the Revenue Performance Evaluation Board for approval. RPEB is composed of representatives from the BIR, the Bureau of Customs, the Department of Finance and the Department of Budget and Management.

The BIR missed its collection targets of P965.9 billion last year by P52.3 billion as it generated only P913.6 billion.

Most of the 113 revenue district officers (RDOs) nationwide did not meet their goals. Only the districts falling under the revenue region of Makati City were spared.

The Lateral Attrition law states that revenue collectors from the BIR and the BOC who fall short of their respective goals by at least 7.5 percent shall be dismissed from service. Those who failed to meet their targets by less than 7.5 percent may avoid dismissal, but shall be consigned to perform another task.

The law also mandates the granting of monetary rewards to those who surpass their targets.

The law was made to encourage employees of the BIR and BOC to exceed their targets and get rid those agencies of underperformers. The law stresses the importance of the role of the BIR and the BOC in helping the national government raise enough revenues to meet its expenditure requirements.

BIR, B2

Peso hits 8-month low

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY TUMBLED TO ITS eight-month low of 44.60 to a dollar on heightened jitters over a global recession, weekend oil fare by the US crude crunch but the weakened oil and food price increases.

"The market is apprehensive because of the continued rise in oil prices amid a slowing global economy," said Christmas Commercial Bank Philippines treasurer Roland Arsenio.

Yesterday the peso opened at 44.45 or near the intra-day low of 44.45 and closed at the day's low against the greenback. It closed Friday at 44.33.

Volume surged to $623.7 million from $511.5 million in the previous session.

The local currency market also traded with caution ahead of the US Federal Reserve meeting this week, wherein the US central bank is widely expected to hold its

P10/B1

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 44.60 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., June 23, 2008

Stock Market

Shares close 3.1 percent lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.1-percent lower yesterday after sharp falls on Wall Street and a spike in oil prices, dealers said.

The composite index lost 70.10 points to 2,490.38, while the all-shares index slipped 2.2 percent to 1,694.76 points.

There were only 17 advancers compared with 94 decliners and 32 that were unchanged.

Turnover amounted to P1.94 billion compared to P1.23 billion on Friday.

"We continue to move in tandem with the (G) markets, and with oil prices provoking the use," said Nelson Agustin of DBP Market Securities.

"Concerns about the spike in oil prices and inflation may not be discounted just yet. The credit problem and the slowdown of the US market also continue to affect the economy," said Jacqueline Saludares in a note.

Telecom giant PLDT slipped 1.8 percent to P2,420. Conglomerate Ayala Corp. fell 5.17 percent to P375. Bank of the Philippine Islands fell 0.4 percent to P44.

San Miguel Corp. saw its "A" shares remain unchanged at P101 while its "B" shares fell 1.18 percent to P85. AKP

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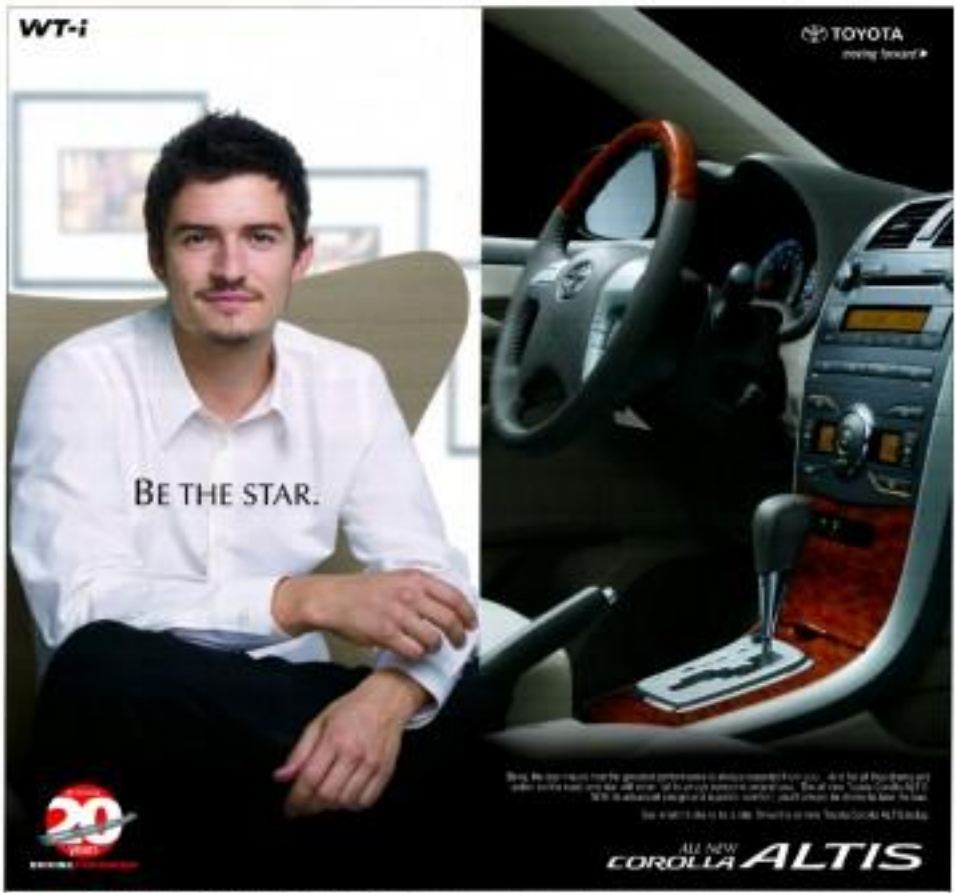

RP-Malaysian venture eyes tourism complex project

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

MALAYSIAN CONGLOMERATE Genting Group and Philippine-listed Alliance Global Group Inc. is looking at investing more than $1 billion in the government-led, reclaimed-shelter casino and tourism complex at the 40-hectare Manila Bay reclamation area.

Alliance Global president Kingson Sian said the consortium was working out the terms of the joint venture with its foreign partner was still moderating a due-diligence study of the project.

Sian said the project might consist of a hotel casino within the complex, possibly a theme park and condominium units.

Alliance Global has told the Philippine Stock Exchange that it was set to sign a joint-venture agreement with international cruise operator first Cruises Ltd., an affiliate of the Malaysian conglomerate Genting Group and the world's third-biggest cruise line operator, for the tourism complex of the state-owned Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

Travellers International Hotel Group Inc., a subsidiary of Alliance Global, will team up with Star Cruises to participate in Pagcor's plan to build an integrated tourism zone on the 40-hectare property.

The project will house an array of leisure and entertainment facilities, including a theme park, theaters, amusement and cultural centers, retail and gaming centers and hotels.

Alliance Global said Pagcor hoped to attract at least $1 billion in investments from both foreign and local investors and generate about 100,000 jobs once the entire development is completed.

Pagcor recently announced that Travellers had qualified to join in developing its integrated resort project.

In its application to Pagcor, Travellers proposed to build hotels with a minimum of 1,000 rooms spread out over several phases of development.

Pagcor's casino complex in Manila Bay area

Are we in a panda market?

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I HAVEN'T BEEN FEELING MYSELF lately, or anyone else for that matter, so I spend three hours on Saturday undergoing three hours of torture in the local vet and dog hospital. The results are due on Tuesday and I am not expecting any more surprises but I have edema in my legs, probably due to my kidneys.

My daughter asked her mother how the human race appeared. Being a Catholic, she told her about Adam and Eve. Then she asked me. Being a scientist, I said we were descended from amphibians and breached off from monkeys. Cheryl was very confused and said to her mom, "How is it that you and me were created by God and Daddy and we were developed from monkeys?" My wife replied, "It is very simple. I told you about my side of the family, he told you about his."

Teacher: "Wena, go to the map and find South America." Wena points to it.

Teacher: "Correct. Now class, who discovered America?"

Class: "Maria."

Teacher: "Johnny why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?"

Johnny: "You told me to do it without using tables."

Teacher: "Ronald, what is the chemical formula for water?"

Ronald: "H-E-L-L-O-H-2-O."

Teacher: "What are you talking about?"

Ronald: "Yesterday you said it was H-2-O."

Teacher: "Cheryl, What was the most important thing we didn't have 11 years ago?"

Cheryl: "Me."

+ + +

IT WAS another bad week in the US with the Dow closing below 12,000, down 3.8 percent. The financial sector remains the worst spot and there is nothing to suggest that it is coming to an end. Moody's cut its rating on the two largest bond insurers, MBIA and Ambac, following in the wake of Fitch and Standard & Poor's. Merrill Lynch downgraded a number of banks, as the sector sneezes. Morgan Stanley (bank of America and Citigroup all tumbled.

S&P also downgraded Ground Motors, which plunged 6.8 percent and even the company's decision to abandon SUVs and switch to buying did not help. Moody's cut Ford's rating from neutral on the basis that its redemption trunk will not pick up. Other big losers included Chrysler, Alcoa, Home Depot, Verizon and the largest manufacturer of flash memory chips, whose name I have forgotten. Google and Yahoo will be up on advertising and the new company will be called YOOGLE.

On Friday the Dow slumped 200 points, partly because it was quadruple witching day. This last exciting is to do with Halloween or covens but occurs every three months when stock futures and options, stock index futures and options all expire on the penultimate Friday of each quarter. If you don't understand this, ask your broker. I bet he doesn't understand it either. If you trade online, ask the computer.

Bernanke and Paulson have promised a stronger dollar but the currency slid against the euro and the pro-cyclical Canadian Prime Index rose 0.4 percent in May the most since November. The Producer Price Index rose by 1.4 percent, far more than expected. Homebuilder confidence fell to a new low and sales are expected to decline in the months ahead. In May 73,000 homes were foreclosed and the situation is expected to worsen. Two of Bear Stearns's hedge fund managers were indicted by a federal grand jury on charges that they intentionally misled investors in two funds.

The King of Saudi Arabia has ordered an increase of 200,000 barrels a day, so he is worried about a slowdown. I am hopeful that the price of oil will stabilize soon as this inflation fears will recede and allow stock markets worldwide to worry less about inflation and concentrate on stimulating their economies. It is not possible to do both at the same time. Most economists feel less than a year but two have lasted 18 months. I think this will be one of the longer ones and continue into next year.

China followed Indonesia in raising fuel subsidies and this means that petrol and diesel will rise by 18 percent and 17 percent, respectively. This will take money from consumers and help importers. Together with further calls on bank deposits from 15.5 percent to 17.5 percent, the government is aiming at a soft landing. The restraint continues to appreciate and this is almost certain to continue until the end of this year. In the long-term, this is good strategy but China's CSI 300 index has fallen 10 out of the past 11 days.

The PSEi has followed the US market. PSEi is back to its 1993 level while BPO and MBO are back to the levels of 2007. In the case of MBO, I think this is exaggerated as a loan loss announced first quarters results up 29 percent and is heading for a record profit of P3.4 billion.

When I recommended the shares at P1.55 two years ago we were in a bull market and the shares rose to P3.60. Profits and earnings are now depressed and the shares are trading up to 8.9% of 7.5, 48 percent below the PSEi. The shares are well below book value and 70 percent below net asset value.

All property companies hedge to some extent by buying steel and cement at the same time as they fix prices. The price of steel has risen by almost 300 percent so MEG and all **other property companies are** increasing prices by at least 30 percent.

Most of their overseas sales come from Asia and the Middle East and only a modest amount from the US. But the Bon Bon monetha, sales are up 50 percent over last year and expansion of BPO office and retail development have been found. Demand for office space remains good.

There are 17 ongoing projects and although higher prices might make it harder for buyers, banks have plenty of cash to lend and nobody is used to it. The manufacturing industry has virtually disappeared, exporters are having a rough time and the only demand comes from home buyers as banks will be willing to grant long-term mortgages.

It looks as if the foreign selling on PSEi is coming to an end and over the last two days they have been net buyers. One broker has a target of P1.54, the broker who is selling huge amounts every day has an updated target of P2.14, four others have targets of P1.10 to P1.50 and one optimist has a target of P4.70. I am buying for trading purposes, as the fall is unjustified.

BIR . . . From page B1

reportedly for social services and infrastructure.

Although the BIR has already recommended the dismissal of some of its personnel, it remains hounded by a lack of manpower. It has even ordered the tax assessor in its budget to hire more people.

A BIR official earlier commented that dismissing officials could further weaken the bureau's operations, saying it was not fair easy to weed rogue officers.

The customs bureau has yet to submit its own report to the BIR.

Peso . . . From page B1

benchmark interest rate steady at 3 percent.

In the past, the series of interest rate cuts by the US Fed prompted offshore investors to seek higher yielding assets from emerging markets like the Philippines. The inflows to local stocks and bonds propped up the peso-and made it Asia's best performing currency last year.

"This is still due to risk aversion and flying credit prices. I'm looking at a range of 44.50-44.70 (for Tuesday)," said Banco de Oro Unibank chief economist Amerbrian Fajardo.

After initially climbing this year to an eight-year high of 40.25 in February, concerns over rising inflation has reversed the peso's upward momentum. The local currency has depreciated by 9.4 percent against the dollar this year, making it the third weakest currency in the region after the Korean won and the Indian rupee, which had fallen by 9.4 percent and 8.3 percent, respectively.

SM's Hamilo Coast sees P2B in sales by yearend

By Dexter L. Lucas

SM INVESTMENT CORP. (SMIC) expects to see strong demand for its exclusive leisure and residential development in Batangas despite the prevailing weakness in the property market.

Sales at SMIC's Pico de Loro project—the first of the 13 zones in the Hamilo Coast—are seen to hit P2 billion by the end of the year, SMIC vice president for sales Elvira Tiu said.

In a press briefing, Tiu said investors would come from the sale of shares in the exclusive club for beachfront dividend and corporate members, as well as sales of the condominium development on the site.

The first condominium, offering studio-type units, has been sold out. SMIC recently "topped off" the building, and is set to start work on the next phase.

Officials said studio-type units would no longer be offered to future projects on the site. Instead, the smallest condominium units will be one-bedroom units aimed at families earning uncertain luxury income outside Metro Manila.

Clients who buy condominium units will also be entitled to accessorize club membership.

Tiu said about 300 individual club shares have been sold to date, only a few months after the

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364-day T-bill rate down by 8.7 bps

Galoc startup delayed again

MANILA, Philippines—Energy Development Corp.'s Galoc oilfield is expected to start in early July as Typhoon Fengshen has brought counteracting work to a halt, adding to a series of delays, equity holder Ong Energy said on Monday.

The Floating Production Storage and Offloading System (FPSO) that is to extract 17,500 barrels per day from the offshore field was disconnected on Friday ahead of the typhoon's passage, Ong Energy told the Australian Stock Exchange.

Reconnection is unlikely before June 27, which will further delay the field's start-up until July, the company said.

"Although there is only minor commissioning work left to be done before production commences, it cannot be completed until the typhoon has passed and the FPSO is reconnected," the statement said.

"First oil is now expected to commence in early July." The announcement came almost two weeks after Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes told reporters first oil was expected in June 15.

It is also the latest in a series of delays that have seen the field's start-up repeatedly postponed from initial plans for a first-quarter start-up.

Ong Energy said the forecast track for the typhoon, which is currently over the South China Sea, continued to be revised westward and it was expected to pass within 150 kilometers of the Galoc oilfield.

The Galoc field has great significance, not only for the Philippines, whose energy output will be raised by 70 percent to more than 40,000 bpd, but also for Ong Energy and Nido Petroleum—two small independent Australian companies that have bet on the underexplored Philippines. Galoc will be Ong Energy's first oilfield to come onstream. Reuters

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE ONE-YEAR TREASURY BILL rate dropped by 8.7 basis points to 6.761 percent in yesterday's auction, as highly liquid banks scrambled for virtually risk-free government securities.

Market appetite for the 364-day bills was strong, as vendors reached P13,446 billion, more than double the government's debt offering of P6 billion. Strong investor interest in the one-year debt paper did not reflect the market's concern over rising inflation, which was cited as the main reason for the rising interest rate on long-term bonds.

"The market seems to be very liquid, and there could be some migration from other placements like SDA (special deposit account)," Philippine Treasurer Salvador Dio said in a briefing after the auction.

SDA, offered by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, is a facility that offers more attractive yields than those of government securities. The central bank, however, recently made adjustments in the SDA by making it available only for long-term investments. This prompted short-term investors to go back to government securities.

Despite the strong demand, however, the finance of the Treasury's auction committee opted to stay within the borrowing program and accepted only 9% billion worth of offers.

Dio said there was no need for reason/interesting because the government still had enough cash to meet immediate requirements.

The government removed the 91- and 182-day bills from the fortnightly auction of short-term government securities in the second quarter because of poor market interest.

Dio said the 182s would likely bring back the 91- and 182-day bills in the third quarter due to strong market demand.

He said the government also intended to sell Retail Treasury bonds later this year.

About P45 billion worth of RTBs are maturing in July, but there is really no pressure to sell new RTBs of the same amount.

"We [government] could sell less than P45 billion in RTBs. We don't need liquidity, we just want to provide investment opportunity to small investors," Dio said.

He said he was hopeful short-term interest rates would remain a downward trend, but said it was hard to predict where interest rate would actually go in the coming weeks.

Hog raisers seek zero tariff on farm inputs

By Amy R. Remo

LOCAL HOG RAISERS ARE SEEKING GOVernment assistance in the form of tariff relief on farm inputs and equipment, and the establishment of a diagnostic laboratory to help them recover from the adverse impact of the diseases that ravaged their farms last year.

In a briefing, Gabriel Uy, chair of the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc., said the industry was seeking zero tariff on feed ingredients and farm equipment.

The industry filed a petition on this last March but the Tariff Commission has yet to act on it, the group said.

Feeds account for 65-70 percent of the industry's cost, which has gone up in P80 a kilo from P60 per kilo early this year.

Last year, about 30 percent of the country's backyard swine farms were wiped out and more than 20 percent of commercial farms were adversely affected by swine diseases, including a strain of the porcine reproduction and respiratory syndrome.

About 60,000 out of the 200,000 sows in Central Luzon had died due to diseases, said Alex Reyes, chair of the NFHF hog committee who held on July 1-4.

"The problem is we have no proper diagnostic laboratory to identify the disease strains that hit local hogs, so we do not know what vaccine we should administer," Uy said.

Reyes said the industry up to now didn't know what particular strains hit their farms. "That's why our medication is still a hit-and-miss."

"It is for this reason that we ask for a state-of-the-art diagnostic lab that can properly identify these diseases," he said.

Another option, he said, was for the government to establish a diagnostic backup by hitting up-ups with the US-based International Swine Control Agency, where countries submitting serum specimens for disease identification.

SM's Hamilo . . .

From page B2

project was launched. About 3,200 individual club shares will be put up for sale once the beach club is fully developed.

Individual shares will for P460,000 each, while shares for corporate buyers sell for P850,000 each.

The Boracay project covers 40 hectares. All told, the 15-acre Hamilo Coast development covers about 6,000 hectares.

SMDC vice president for investor relations Corazon Gutierrez told reporters that as much as P7 billion would be spent to develop the project over the next five years.

Gutierrez said the Hamilo Coast project was expected to inject new life into the local economy of Batangas.

"We expect to employ as many as 30,000 people for this whole project, and much of that will come from the local community," she said.

BUSINESS

Due to strong demand, PNB able to raise ₱6B

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK HAS RAISED P6 billion from the offering of subordinated notes, qualifying its tier 2 capital, boosting its capital base ahead of a merger with Allied Banking Corp.

Taipan Lucio Tan's banking unit yesterday announced that there was an oversubscription to its offering—with orders reaching more than P9 billion, or three times the announced deal size of P3 billion.

Given the strong demand, PNB opted to upsize the issuance to P6 billion, the maximum issue amount approved by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"We are extremely pleased with the outcome of the transaction as it provides us with a new source of capital ahead of our planned merger with Allied Banking Corp.," said Cesar Bytor Mao, PNB president and CEO. "This speaks highly of the strong confidence in the bank of both retail and institutional investors which bought the issue."

The notes, issued at par, carried a coupon rate of 8.5 percent per annum, or 45 basis points below the five-year government benchmark rate on pricing date—the first-ever peso-denominated lower tier 2 deal to be priced below the benchmark.

The issue will jack up PNB's capital adequacy ratio—or cash buffer against risky assets—from 19 percent to about 22.2 percent.

Lower tier 2 capital is supplementary capital packaged as an interest-bearing note with a defined tenor of at least five years. The ranking of these notes is subordinated to the claims of bank depositors and senior creditors.

Due to strong and early interest in the deal, PNB's offer period was shortened to seven business days. The offering was closed on June 12, allowing the bank to issue the notes by June 19.

Doris C. Dumlao

BSP seen to hike key rate by 75 bps

French bank says benchmark rate may hit 6% by yearend

By Doris C. Dumlao

FRENCH BANKING GIANT BNP Paribas expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to raise its benchmark interest rate by another 75 basis points—making the year as 6 percent—to curb the spillover effects of rising food and fuel prices.

An BSP Market June global outlook, economist Andrew Wenbin said the bin recent monetary tightening would likely continue in the Philippines, as well as in most other emerging markets in Asia, through next year.

By mid-2009, the bank sees the BSP's overnight borrowing setting at around 6.5 percent—a possible increase of 125 basis points from the current level of 5.25 percent.

"Recent central bank action in the region indicates that monetary policies will become tighter through higher interest rates and, where possible, through stronger currencies, or a combination of both," Perrin said.

The tighter policy is seen as a necessary measure to temper price pressures. From a benign consumer price increase of 2.8 percent posted last year, BNP Paribas projects a much higher inflation of 8.5 percent this year and 6.5 percent next year.

Central banks tend to tighten monetary policy—such as by hiking interest rates or increasing banks' reserve requirements—in order to mop up excess money in the system that could otherwise fuel consumer and business spending.

"As global food prices are not expected to peak until early 2009, there will continue to add pressures to locally driven food price increases," Perrin said. "Hence, we expect higher food inflation in 2008, and some deceleration in 2009, but definitely not a return to pre-2008 food inflation rates."

The Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and, to some extent, Thailand and Taiwan, are but some of the Asian countries that do not subsidize oil prices and thus allow global rates to be reflected in their domestic prices.

With local inflation hitting a nine-year high of 9.6 percent in May, the BSP early this month hiked its benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point for the first time in three years.

For its part, the BSP does not see the current situation of negative interest rates—where inflation is higher than interest rates, thereby paying fixed-income earners at a loss—persisting in the Philippines.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco is it, also said that the country's inflation path would largely depend on the movement of oil and food prices.

For the full year, the BSP expects inflation to average at 7 to 8 percent and, for next year, at 4 to 6 percent.

Smart bags yet another international plum

THE PHILIPPINES' biggest mobile telecommunications firm, Smart Communications Inc., bagged the Mobile Operator of the Year award, which officials yesterday said.

The award was given by the Asian Mobile News, a leading online industry magazine in the region, which organizes the annual awards for the top Asian mobile operators and handsets.

It was the second time Smart was recognized as the country's mobile operator of the year, having first received the same award in 2005.

"We've done this through world-first innovations that enabled us to sell 'prepaid' to people whose low income levels had previously excluded [them] from using cellular phones," said Napoleon L. Nazareno, Smart president and CEO.

NAPOLEON L. Nazareno of Smart receives the award from Timothy Chia of Asian Mobile News.

Nazareno also said that the firm's investments in IT technologies led to the development of prepaid and mobile commerce platforms that allowed Smart to address the needs of the different segments of its subscriber base.

"These include service packages that offer various combinations of text and voice call offers ... and more affordable and widely available broadband Internet access services," he said. (Rio T. Olchondra)

Race to the finest

IN THE NEW SCRIBE LEC OF HBL'S IN VIET this week, the Lola in the Dilinot will become a sanctum. Finance, unless interesting!

Well, that is New York, the world's financial capital. I don't think the president wants to go there in search of Broadway musical, theming to New York must have something to do with money.

It seems that the Arroyo administration wants to woo tons of investments into the country. Indeed, the Lola is addressing a seminar entitled "Financing for Philippine Infrastructure and Privatization Projects."

The last time I checked, those projects still needed billions upon billions of dollars. A single power-generating plant of the state-owned Napocor, for instance, can cost almost $1 billion already. The rehabilitation of the North Luzon Expressway, which was done by the Lopez group, also reached more than a billion dollars. Infrastructure and privatization are no longer developing countries.

And New York is home to hundreds of fund managers, who today have this rather pleasant "problem" of having to deal with hundreds of billions of dollars in oil revenues—i.e., windfall profits—of oil-producing countries.

I pray that the Lola gets for us even just a pinch of that celebration.

* * *

IT LOOKS like the battle royale between the majority stockholders and a minority group in the Philippine Racing Club Inc. (PRCI), which operates a horse racetrack in Metro, will just have to play out before the Supreme Court.

Anyway, last Wednesday, PRCI was supposed to hold its annual stockholders meeting. The majority was ready to approve the business strategy, basically spinning off the prime property to a real estate corporation.

For that, PRCI got a Supreme Court ruling that invalidated all previous attempts of the minority to block the real estate spin-off, such as a TRO issued by a Makati Regional Trial Court, which prevented stockholders from conducting a meeting.

Lo and behold, despite the Supreme Court order, another court issued another TRO against the transfer of the property.

How the courts can dictate upon a private corporation in its own business strategy, exactly, is beyond me.

Issues aside from the issues were even upset the decision handed down by the company's highest and finest judicial body which, if I'm not mistaken, is still the Supreme Court.

The TRO was issued by another Makati RTC last Tuesday, the day before the stockholders meeting. It was meant to stop the stockholders from approving their own company's spin-off project.

The PRCI office, however, received the TRO at around 5 p.m. I don't know, but maybe the minority requested PRCI directors and officers to be at their office waiting for possible court orders.

I mean, who in his right mind will serve a court decision that late in the day? And this guy is in the racing business?

Not only that, on the hearing day the following Thursday, or right after the stockholders meeting, what should the minority group do but to ask for a postponement for the simple reason that they were not prepared.

So, what argument did they use to get the TRO? Beats me too!

* * *

BREAKING that hostile takeover of the huge Tampakan (Mindanao) copper mine by the Swiss mining titans, some groups in the target company Indophil Resources are ready to fight.

Indophil and the local Ben Ahern own 22.5 percent of the Tampakan mines.

Indophil managing director and CEO Richard Lockhouse, together with the Ahern Group and Crosby Capital Partners, announced last Friday that they would make a counteroffer of A$1.28 per share in Indophil.

That offer puts the value of Indophil at approximately A$540 million.

Word in banking is that the bid of Lundmins, Xstrata and Crosby is definitely superior than Xstrata's offer of A$1 per share.

Which goes to show that the Indophil group is confident that the project will prosper despite Xstrata's badmouthing of the Philippines as an investment site.

In its hostile takeover bid, Xstrata tried to lure Indophil stockholders by claiming that, in the Philippines, the government has not approved any mining project in the league of the Tampakan find, which is reputed to be the second largest undeveloped copper deposit in the world.

Xstrata also said that the Tampakan project will require infrastructure that will need government approvals.

And how hard are those to get, right?

Another thing, Xstrata said the project faces an astonishing lobby, agitating for the cessation of activities at the Tampakan project.

The Tampakan project has been, and remains to be, according to the raiding Xstrata, a public target for various armed terrorist organizations.

Tsk, tsk ... so why is Xstrata so hot about it?

* * *

THE LOCAL personal care products maker Splash Corp., which is listed at the PSE, declared P134 million in cash dividends during its recent annual stockholders meeting.

The company is the maker of the popular beauty product brands Enrace and Bioflash.

Splash president and COO Jessie Soriano expected a 22-percent growth in net income of P107.25 million for 2008.

The increase came about due to the phenomenal sales growth of Splash's beauty and personal care products, which topped P1 billion, Soriano attributed the good performance to the company's 34 new products.

Thus, Splash reported a net operating income of P117 million, for an amazing 44-percent growth.

By the way, skin care products accounted for about a third of our sales, and I will not be surprised if my wife bought half of it.

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bacud III

LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Healing by light

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

Frequency-generated therapy is said to offer an alternative to health and wellness

AN ADVERTISING EXECutive by background, Jocelyn Mendoza ventured into natural healing when her best friend and business partner (who shall remain unnamed) was diagnosed with uterine cancer.

"I felt so inadequate just taking my friend to doctors, therapy sessions, probing her relentlessly at the malls and airports, buying her medications" she recalls. Every hour-long session with the oncologist drained them helpless and feeling inadequate.

When her friend was struck with intestinal adhesions, she had to stay in the hospital for two months for 48 sessions of radiation on her abdomen and stomach. But instead of getting well after being discharged, Mendoza's friend's uterine cancer metastasized into the upper lobe of her lung.

Meanwhile, her friend's aunt also had a tumor in her right bronchial tube, and the oncologist recommended bronchotomy.

"She went to pardong her (the way godchildren—approximately P150,000 a month), with the treatment running for a year. Through a referral, the aunt underwent frequency-generated therapy (FGT). In 18 sessions, the lung tumor diminished.

Although, the therapy helped manage Mendoza's friend's cancer, she died of other complications—eminently low blood pressure that led to multiple-organ failure. Nonetheless, FGT helped prolong her life without expensive medication.

Light and sound generator

FGT is a light and sound generator that looks like a fluorescent floor lamp and is used for pain management.

Developed in the '30s by an American scientist, it involves lethal microorganisms by shifting to their natural frequency, or the number of cycles per second at which they pulsate.

Explaining the technology, Mendoza says, "Think of the body as a battlefield. There's something going on between the enemies [the pathogens] and the body. FGT is the bazooka and it kills the enemies who are giving the body a hard time."

Acquiring the FGT machine, Mendoza studied the protocols to destroy the patient's cancer cells, viruses, bacteria, parasites and infections. She also used the machine to boost the patient's energy and aura.

Good use

Left with the FGT machine, Mendoza eventually decided to put it to good use by opening the Peace of Light Wellness Center.

"I just got into the wellness business because of the circumstances time I invested in taking care of her. I saw how she tried to win the battle of the big C till the end, with her constant connection with God and with the exposure to the FGT machine," she says.

Mendoza says success stories have happened at the center. Mendoza cites patients, recommended by a dermatologist, who were relieved of psoriasis.

"With over a thousand affidavits that I discovered FGT could banish, there's only a couple than I've not heard—no increase and taking the death! Even behavioral changes have a corresponding frequency set," says Mendoza.

Side effects

While clients describe their conditions and the litany of medications, the wellness center provides them research-based information on the medications' possible side effects and recommends precautions.

"How could I question what medication does to sickness? Although it helps drive out the symptoms, toxins build up.

"The body has no demands to get rid of the unwanted chemicals and debris left from killed pathogens. When this happens, the body's immune system gets a boost and healing begins. With healing comes a variety of good feelings. Then with every given feeling comes a sweet smile that goes contagious," she says.

Doctors who have seen improvements in patients after a few sessions of FGT have been very positive. Mendoza adds that the Peace of Light Wellness Center has an in-house medical doctor, an internist.

Peace of Light is at Unit 1502 Garden Heights, 209 E. Rodriguez Avenue, New Manila, QC (tel. 5862497 and 4073146); and Unit 801 Dauer Bldg., 7861 Bagtikan, San Antonio Village, Makati (09062462, 2871688 and 8910701 loc. 101).

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The Filipino Poker Tour 3, June 28 & 29 at 1pm, The Metro 3 Million Metro Card Club, Metrowalk, Meralco Ave, Pasig City.

For more information on schedules and how to qualify for this tournament, visit www.filipinopokertour.com

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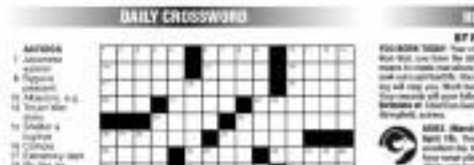

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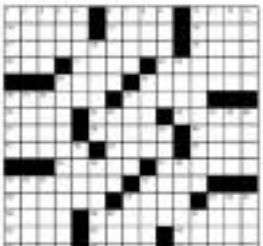

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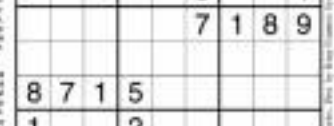

Make grocery shopping fun and healthy

By Mitzi Feliza
Contributor

GROCERY SHOPPING DOESN'T HAVE to be a weekly event to look forward to, especially for the health-conscious people. It is also a good chance to test your lifestyle management and self-control skills when it comes to food selection.

According to Bobi Dorado, a well-known fitness trainer and author of "Get with the Program! Guide to Food Eating," as you begin to change your eating habits, you also need to change your shopping habits.

The following tips will help you change your shopping attitude and behavior so you can save more calories and money.

Be mentally and physically prepared

▸Never shop when you are hungry. Make sure you had enough for breakfast, lunch or dinner so you won't end up buying unplanned snacks like chocolates or chips.

▸Do not forget the grocery list that you prepared.

▸Follow your weight management goals. Before you enter a supermarket, strengthen your self-control by repeating the mantra "I am in breakthrough personality now and I am ready to choose nutritious and healthy foods today."

Have a budget

▸Most of your grocery money should be allotted to fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats, skimless poultry, whole grain breads, rice, pasta and low-calorie dairy products.

▸Just buy what you need and don't be tempted by special offers or promos. If what you bought exceeded your budget, keep the nutritious items.

▸If you shop with your kids, give them a limit. Pia Arellano, 33, vice president for marketing and corporate communications, would give her children a budget of P100 every week to buy what they want. This prevents her family from getting exposed to high-calorie foods at home.

Strategize your supermarket tour

▸Enter the supermarket through the door nearest the vegetables and fruits section. Spend a lot of time at the area where healthy products are mostly located.

▸Your grocery list should be based on the planned sequence of your tour.

▸Do not fill your cart with high-calorie foods.

It's a good chance to test your lifestyle management and self-control skills

Adapted from The Real Good Guide by Frances Avaplenos

Learn how to read nutrition facts

▸Multiply the total calories per serving by the total number of servings in the container.

▸Choose low fat food products which are less than three grams of fat per serving. Don't get deceived with snack foods like crackers with more than five grams of fat per serving.

▸Beware of high-sodium products like canned soups and vegetables.

▸Choose foods with less than 10 g of sugar per serving.

▸Use breads or cereals with two grams or more of fiber per serving.

▸If the product is "low-carb," make sure it's also low in fat and sodium; and if it's "low fat," check if it's low in fat and sodium.

Make it a healthy event

▸Use a pedometer to remind you of the number of steps to complete during your supermarket tour. This will also help you accomplish a well-planned shopping.

▸Discover healthy alternatives to your favorite foods like low-fat frozen yogurt if you are on ice cream lover and low-calorie cereal bar for chocoholics.

▸Explore other supermarkets in your area, especially those selling whole grain breads, cereals and pasta.

▸Share your healthy grocery shopping knowledge with your spouse or children.

E-mail the author at mitzifeliza@gmail.com

Don't eat your way out of depression

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

THE MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTION is "How can I get back the figure I had when I was 21?" The answer is a little complicated.

At 21, your body chemistry may seem set for life, but it isn't. You still will grow taller, wider, heavier. But that largely depends on you. While genes play a major role in your body shape and size (something like 70 percent), there is still that 30 percent that you can influence. Let's call it the factor. And it's called lifestyle.

There is a way if you have the will. Take Enid as an example. At 25, he had a crisis, saturates body. Fifteen years later, he gained 68 lbs and lost his arm support. When asked what happened, he simply replied, "I didn't stop eating."

The same goes for Annie who at 55 looks like she is 66. A lifetime overweight problem led to her depression. Upon further inquiry, Fred realized that an image problem without the support of a healthy lifestyle for life years. Body "sin" then was out of discontent and unhappiness.

How to avoid bingeing

1. Run all "impulsive comfort bingeing." Even if you feel good deemphasizing that hunger coming with dinner or scrapping off the bottom of that half gallon of butter pecan ice cream, by morning you would have gained three pounds. Feeling sorry about it, you will feel helpless, and then succumb again to your cravings. It's a vicious cycle.

2. Move it. Start any kind of exercise program. If you can't do it alone, join a gym class. The group energy will become your support and therapy.

3. Get involved. Join any civic organization or movement. Doing something worthwhile is a great morale booster.

4. Eat more often but in smaller portions. Scientific studies have shown that if you give your body enough food to burn an energy slump will be no excuse. So, opt for five to six mini meals instead of three hearty. Don't eat out most or parts at night. Its digestion time of six to eight hours is too taxing on your system.

5. Sate more often. And it isn't bad food we are talking about. With so high-calorie foods.

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Murder victim makes his presence felt

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licaros

HERE'S AN INTERESTING LETTER from a reader we shall call Anne (not her real name):

"Dear Jaime,

"I just want to share my story and to be enlightened about events that happened years back.

"In 2002, my brother-in-law Oscar (not his real name) was murdered. While my husband and I were in Singapore on that fateful day, Oscar's wife, my husband called me up and while we were talking I heard a sound on the phone and I thought there was something wrong with his car. I even asked my husband if he could hear it, but he said no. Then I heard it again, and this time it became clearer to me that it was more of a cry of a person in pain or "ungol." I told my husband what I was hearing but at his end he heard nothing of the sort. Then, as a flash, I thought it might be Oscar's car horn in pain.

"During his wake, there was one night I was standing facing the door of the mortuary and at my back was the coffin. I saw sisters coming and where they got seated, I knew for sure that things that transpired already were they entered, the way they were talked, the way they were talking. It was a case of déjà vu.

"I also remember months before Oscar's death, I had dreams that materialized after a month or two. The accuracy of the dreams was mind-boggling.

"I was wondering why during those particular months they happened in others and at short intervals. Until experience déjà vu, but it's back to long intervals. Was it a warning, a alert? And the crying on the phone...is it really possible that Oscar was trying to communicate with us? If I didn't get warned, what things could have happened if he was really communicating at that time? Why did these experiences related to his death happen to me and not to his siblings with whom he was much closer? Or to his mother?

"It's been years after Oscar's death but these questions have always been at the back of my mind hoping to be answered."

Anita

Here are my answers to your questions:

Yes, it is possible the voice you heard was those post-murdered bodies or his ghost. Some victims of sudden deaths, like those in accident, possess a state of shock in the after life. They are not sure where they are. They may not even know they are already dead. Some who may become aware they are already dead may not be ready to accept that fact. They could be in a state of denial. And so they may continue to do what they are used to doing while still alive, like going to the office or reading a newspaper during breakfast, etc.

Some who are aware that they have been murdered, like in the case of Oscar, may still be lingering for justice. If they were to gain before they died, they may express the sound of anguish or pain. So one who is sometimes may hear some haunting sounds.

Why is it that you heard the noise would be the phone, but your husband didn't? Because your husband is probably not as sensitive as you are.

People who are not sensitive to the spirit or psychic forces do not experience or encounter such things, that's why it's hard to sometimes them quite exist.

Why is it that those closer to Oscar like his siblings or his mother did not experience what you have experienced with him? Because they may not have a clairvoyant vision or third eye open, or may not be sensitive enough. But you have mediumistic tendency and spirits can see this. So they manifest to you and not to them. It is difficult for spirits to find a channel that's compatible with them. It is just a question of openness to the spirit world and to the same vibratory rate or frequency. If you are tuned to an FM band on radio, you can't hear AM broadcast, right? Exactly the same thing happens in spirit communications. The two must be in the same frequency.

If you were not scared, and sensitive to him, you may have been able to hear what Oscar was telling you. You may even get to know the name of the killer. Or he may have left clues that were, or at least the description of the killers. Or he may have some message he has to relay to you.

You asked why your déjà vu experience happened more often during the months following Oscar's death, and not before. Perhaps the spirits of this sort make people become more sensitive to psychic and spiritual forces. And these manifest at times to deceive. According to some "primitive" cultures, before something happens to one undergoing stress, they first appear to other persons.

If we try to learn more about the spirit world, we will not get scared when we encounter them at our working state and will know exactly how to handle the situations.

Note: The next Basic ESP & Intuition Development seminar is on July 5-6, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. at Rm. 310 Prince Plaza 1 Cond., Legaspi St., Greenhills. Mandaluyong. Call 8437265/ 8924860, fax 8150890, or e-mail innerawareness_2000@yahoo.com.ph.

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Take Charge Doc!
By: Dr. Ma. Luisa Mendoza

What is the natural course of dengue infection and what are its implications?

SECURITY Bank senior president and chief finance officer Carlos Barcenas and MasterCard country manager Poch Villa-Real

NADINE Javier and Rica Peloton of Security Bank

BILLIE Liu and Michael Bel of Gold Way Digital Inc.

JACKIE Papa of SB Cards and Anton Corra of MasterCard

ANDREW Cojuanco of SB Cards and the event host, Sam Oh

PAUL Mapua of Lehlapanni and Tanya Uitzon of Abenson

Have a good life with new credit card promo

SECURITY BANK CELEBRATES THE good life filled with freebies yesterday with the launching of Security Bank Platinum MasterCard, dahlings.

With this card you get great deals, financial freedom, worldwide recognition, anytime anywhere.

Present at the happening was no less than Security Bank senior vice president and chief finance officer Carlos Barcenas and MasterCard country manager Poch Villa-Real.

Cardholders can avail of special privileges from top golf courses, hotels, resorts and spas around the world through MasterCard lifestyle programs.

"Good life" just keeps getting better and better and so much more pleasurable, if both, pahinggan?

Now, you are privileged through the Security Bank Platinum MasterCard, you can pay your bills either by pesos or US dollars. Most of all, you get a free, yes, pahinggan, free travel insurance of up to an astronomical P12 million. Not bad, hah?

Fun lunch at Circles

It was a really fun get-together for the lunch bunch at one of my favorite restos, Circles of the Ivory Ivory Shangri-La Hotel Makati. The hotel's unsurpassable Shangri-La hostlie welcomed us, led by the attentive and ever-present Vivian Lo, Sellers country manager of Cathay Pacific. She informed us of their latest innovative programs, dahlings.

Aptly the usual exchanging of calling cards, we sat down for the dishes lunch. There it was time to announce that Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts in the Philippines has the honorable no-up-with Asia Miles. This program enables members of Asia Miles to gain extra mileage while dining in style.

All you Asia Miles members can now earn fabulous miles when dining in any of the Oaks sets, pahinggan: 21 fine outlets of Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts and Traders Hotel in the country. This brings award-winning partners in 270 in 20 cities around the world, ex-cites.

For every P40 spent with Asia Miles program you get five extra Asia Miles. Not bad, hah?

Shangri-La's unmatchable SP and GM Greg Begon, said in his welcome remarks: "We are delighted to have Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts in the Philippines and Traders Hotel, known to offer delightful cuisine that caters to local and foreign guests, on board as our dining partner, as it is the only hotel group to have the strongest presence in the country. We are sure this will further strengthen Asia Miles' position as Asia's leading travel and lifestyle reward program."

Check it out, dahlings, or you don't miss on this life chance. Contact a travel professional or visit www.shangri-la.com.

Power of women

That popular Metrobank Income Visa gave their all-out support to Fashion Week Queen, dahlings. It was a fantastic eye-catching soiree that brings out the freshness and super dynamism from the Philippine fashion industry, with some of the most exciting, awesome new designers in town. "Silverlook Process Visa fits well with Fashion Week Queen as they both recognize the strength of women who are smart, confident, and career-oriented," explained Metrobank's Angie Sy Ramirez.

The shows featured the creations of Mike Alcela Rom, JC Buendia, James Reyes, Oji Medes, Ariel Rosaldo and Jojie Llorca.

Several super stylish women were named the Fashion Week Premier. Check it out, pahinggan, as more empowered women will be chosen here among the guests of the after-noon fashion show. The Fashion Week series continues in August till the end of the year at the grand lobby of Shangri-La Hotel Makati, no less, dahlings.

METROBANK Card's Anjie Dy Buncio, Ayen Laurel and Tony Meloto, Metrobank Card's dynamic president.

FASHION Week Premier Lulu Tan-Gan during the Miss Universe Rosa show.

METROBANK Card honchos Butch Reyes, John Khu and Mon Tinio with Dulce Ann Hofer

COLLEEN Escalona is Metrobank Card's Fashion Week Premier during Ariel Rosaldo's show.

CECIL Soliman, Carmina Sanchez and Metrobank Card's Ana Carreiro

MIKEL Villarreal and Mikel Jarrin

FELINO Lee and Carol Tan

L'OPERA's Akira Nagai and talented Marcos Matsi

SUGAR Chiongbian, Celine Gabriel and Rose Montenegro

ANTON Sun Diego and Vicki Belo

POPULAR Greg Begon, vice president/GM, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, with Vivian Lo, country manager of Cathay Pacific Airways

MAGATI Shangri-La Hotel's director of communications Joy Wanstor

ANDREA Hanselmann, GM, Traders Hotel, Manila

MCR with Joy Lopez, director of sales and marketing, Traders Hotel, Manila; and Michael Silvana, director of marketing, Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resorts & Spa

GUSHING New Zealander Raymond Bragg, GM, Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort & Spa; with third workbook Christopher Chia, GM, Edsa Shangri-La; and Sinan Yilmaz, hotel manager, Makati Shangri-La

Grand opening of Brana

Me was absolutely amazed, pahinggan, with the grand opening of Brana, that had the perfect outing "Brana" to Filipino Group's new place in Serendra, alongside vibe resort, hot Bluffont Bistro, co-Bonifacio High Street, Fort Bonifacio.

Brana is a wonderful find, absolutely perfect with its fantastic list of tantrum, delicious, cosmopolitanes, mojitos, spins on mojitos.

Filipino Group's head baby star has her own choices as well. Check out the Cachucha—the Italian version of lapis and beer d'oeuvres; spicy pulpo (octopus) juicy succulent dancers served with a plethora of lemon dipping sauce; perfectly deep-fried mozzarella sticks; homemade parmigiana chips; truffle-infused popcorn; pizzas, pizzas, pizzas, plus more pizzas. Check these sumptuous treats at Brana.

For reservations, pahinggan: Call 8563723.

GOING TO WED Joana Manalac and Ricky Yupangco

GAME Nepo and Comrade Aquilino Sr.

ENTERTAINMENT

Alice Evaristo Q. Velarde

and feedback: inquirer.entertainment@inquirer.com.ph or email us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Carlo J straddles top 2 networks with 'telekomiks'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

PLAYFULLY, CARLO J. Caparas says he is the only one still "alive and kicking" among the komiks masters given the Presidential Medal of Merit last year.

It's an esteemed list of honorees that included Mars Ravelo, Tony Velasquez and Francisco "Francisco" Coching, says Carlo J.

"They were all my idols; they were the greatest."

Like Ravelo's works, the Caparas komiks catalogue is continuously being tuned by TV networks for primetime, streetsye and telenovela materials.

GMA 7 recently acquired the TV rights to the youth romance drama, "Te Amo mi Vida"; originally serialized in the Inquirer, Carlo J reports.

He relates that the Kapuso channel has also clinched the rights to the TV versions of "Tony Boy," "Kadlan de Saya," "Angela Markado," "Kumintang" and "Gagambino."

Casting for these TV shows is ongoing, except for the "Gagambino" superhero role, assigned to Dennis Trillo.

Carlo J believes Robin Padilla, who is currently romping another one of his iconic creations, "Joaquin Bordado," will be perfect for the TV remake of "Tony Boy," the rough boxer previously played on the big screen by Fernando Poe Jr.

Robin is also a shoo-in for the comedy, "Notres de Saya," which originally was billed "de Sangre and Gloria Diaz, Carlo J says, or maybe hosing champ Manny Pacquiao.

"Angela Markado" is also being developed by GMA 7, he notes; "Angela" is slated to run between 65 to 90 film story that were in an international film festival."

The movie, directed by National Artist Lino Brocka and which starred Hilda Koronel, won the Gold Montgolfier (grand prize) at the 1983 Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes, France.

Donna reveals that top-caliber actresses Maricel Soriano, Dawn Zulueta, Rosanna Roces and Claudine Barretto are in contention to play the tormented mother in the remakes of Ravelo komiks in the original.

Carlo J isn't surprised that he's able to shuttle between the Kapuso and Kapamilya camps.

"Since when I was still making Kadlan, I was never tied down to anyone exclusively. I worked with [Atty. Gigi] Joaral, Lualquiza, Sr., Allied...

"And when we started producing movies, we worked with both Viva and Regal," Donna points out.

Carlo J explains: "So artist's loyalty belongs only to his craft."

Email: bayanisandiego@hotmail.com

Top-caliber actors

Although Carlo J is eyeing someone like Iza Calzado for the Bituin TV remake, Kristine Hakil has already been attached to the project, according to his reports.

Several Cipto J works are also being tuned into TV serials by ABS-CBN, relates Dennis Villa, his wife and producing partner. Among these, she says, are "Bituin," "Gabriel," "Mga Bituin," and "Pieta."

ES hosts reported that Rene Requiestas will play the black sheep son in "Pieta," previously portrayed by Ace Vergel in the movie directed by Carlo J.

2008 Cinemalaya opens July 11

HOPES ARE HIGH THAT THE 2008 Cinemalaya film festival and competition will match the hauntingly elevated standards set by the indie showcase's first three editions.

From July 11 to 20 at the CCP, film buffs will be viewing 28 films competing in the festival's full-length category, which were culled from a total of 194 storylines submitted to the competition.

In addition, 10 short films will be on view — plus a new competition of films for children, a laudable initiative supported by the National Council for Children's Television.

There will also be a tribute to Manuel Conde, with six movies comprising his retrospective: "Genghis Khan," "Prinsesa Urduja," "Tarhata," "Ulan sa Disyerto," and "El Indio." But the late actor-director has surviving snippet of "Juan Tamad Goes to Congress," it was only 10 minutes long.

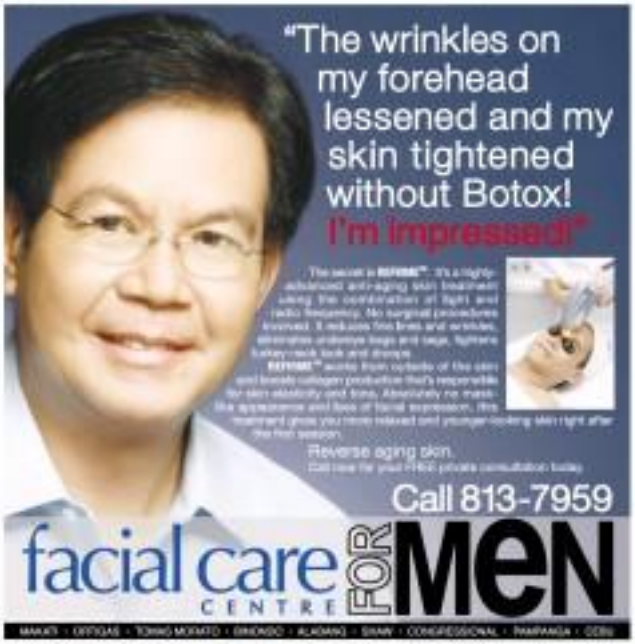
VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

All the same reason, then, to cheer Cinemalaya's foray on Conde, and Nic Tiongson's new book, "The Cinema of Manuel Conde," which will be launched on July 10 to close the festival.

But for many film buffs, Cinemalaya's focal point is still its full-length category with 10 new features up for viewing. With the festival opening on July 11, it isn't too early to size up the official movies, depending on your preferences.

• "300" by Chris Martinez is about a mentally ill woman's fatal crush on a cockfighter she dies. Will



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CINEMA ACCESS: 635-5555

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GALLERIA

1 GET SMART
2 KUNG FU PANDA
3 ALTERED
4 GET SMART
5 INCREDIBLE HULK
6 MADE OF HONOR
7 THE HAPPENING
8 IndieSine: HOGOT
9 MADE OF HONOR
10 URDUJA

ERMITA

1 URDUJA
2 MADE OF HONOR
3 ALTERED
4 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
5 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
6 KUNG FU PANDA
7 GET SMART
8 CARE GIVER
9 THE HAPPINESS

METRO EAST

1 ALTERED
2 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 MADE OF HONOR
5 NARNIA:PRINCE CASPIAN
6 THE HAPPENING
7 GET SMART
8 URDUJA

NOVALICHES

1 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
2 MADE OF HONOR
3 GET SMART
4 KUNG FU PANDA

PIONEER

1 GET SMART
2 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
3 URDUJA
4 MADE OF HONOR

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2 MADE OF HONOR
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 GET SMART
5 URDUJA

LIPA

1 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
2 URDUJA
3 KUNG FU PANDA
4 CARE GIVER

DASMARINAS

1 URDUJA
2 GETSMART
3 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
4 MADE OF HONOR

IMUS

1 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
2 URDUJA
3 GET SMART
4 MADE OF HONOR

ANGELES

1 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
2 URDUJA
3 MADE OF HONOR
4 GET SMART

STARMILLS

1 URDUJA
2 MADE OF HONOR
3 CARE GIVER
4 GET SMART
5 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

BACOLOD

1 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
2 GET SMART
3 MADE OF HONOR
4 KUNG FU PANDA
5 DECEPTION
6 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN

ILOILO

1 GET SMART
2 SEX AND THE CITY
3 MADE OF HONOR
4 THE INCREDIBLE HULK
5 NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN
6 KUNG FU PANDA

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SOON TO OPEN

LUZON

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS + MINDANAO

2008 Cinemalaya opens July 11

From page D1

Mylene Dizon, Eugene Domingo, Nonie Bunoan, TJ Trinidad, etc.

"Baby Ingrid" by Joel Saltat and Abi Aquino shows what happens when an aborted baby is found near a small apartment complex. The lives of some tenants are turned upside down as they are forced to confront the ghosts of the past. With Andi Lorenzo, Kathryn Luna, Gio Quesada, etc.

"Trans" by Hiro Ongkoko Marill is about the friendship that develops between a risks teacher and his student, a trans, abused boy. They discover each other's struggle and weaknesses by expressing them through risks. With Coco Belgado, Nicky Davao, Meryll Soriano, Cherry Pie Picache, etc.

"Status" by Sara Shenberger focuses on two Ilonggan kids who are lured by illegal loggers to smuggle logs from the mountains of Masbate. They discover a world of greed and ideological conflict that plagues the future of their people.

"Concrete" by Paul Sheridan is about a piano concert held toward the end of Pinatubo War II in a town outside Dream City. Shows are questioned as a family treads the thin line between sanity and friendship with the occupying Japanese troops. With Jay Aquitania, Meryll Soriano, Maureen Bermudez, Nonoy Peralta, Elizabeth Castillo, etc.

"Hiding Pamela" by Paul Sta. Ana and Alvin Yapan offers an interactive confluence of paths between a writer and a cam driver who becomes a street child's father figure. With Agot Isidro and Mel Ayan Sese.

"Dip" by Francis Xavier Pasion is about two protagonists with the same name — a gay TV producer who documents the case of a gay hate crime victim, also named Jay. Eventually the producer is drawn to the secret life and love of his subject. With Baron Geisler and Gian Martin.

"Mr. Bike Assassin Accor" by Denoll Ibleza and Ted Thongwan. A workplace comedy that follows the lives of all senior agents for six months.

"Tuners" by Jay Abello follows the ongoing flirtation between Manuel and Lourdes, whose favorite stories revolve around food.

"Butchers" by Michael Ortiz-Ian Cardoz unfolds in a small provincial jail, where Ricardo is about to be released. But a knife is repeated winning, and the story takes some unexpected turns. With Gary Lim, Ana Kristhoss, Daniel Magbag, etc.

Call 551-7930 to 932-2354.

'The Warlords'

Art Ich Jones swore, "The Warlords," was recently previewed at My Cinema at Greenbelt 3, and will open soon in local theaters.

POWER PLANT CINEMA

ROCKWELL CENTER MAKATI

GET SMART (PG13) 12:15, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30	KUNG FU PANDA (G) 1:30, 3:55, 6:00, 8:05, 10:10	MADE OF HONOR (PG13) 1:40, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:20
INCREDIBLE HULK (G) 2:35, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20	SEX AND THE CITY (R13) 1:45, 4:40, 7:35, 10:30	GET SMART (PG13) 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

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	THE HAPPENING	KUNG FU PANDA	MADE OF HONOR	THE INCREDIBLE HULK
GREENBELT 1	GET SMART	THE INCREDIBLE HULK		
GREENBELT 3	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	GET SMART		
	KUNG FU PANDA	MADE OF HONOR	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	GET SMART	THE INCREDIBLE HULK		
	MADE OF HONOR	KUNG FU PANDA	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	GET SMART	MADE OF HONOR	KUNG FU PANDA	THE INCREDIBLE HULK
MARKET! MARKET!	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	KUNG FU PANDA		
	UNTOLD	MADE OF HONOR	GET SMART	
TRINOMA	UNTOLD	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	KUNG FU PANDA	
	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	THE INCREDIBLE HULK	GET SMART	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — BARANGAY SAN LORENZO, June 24, Glorietta Activity Center

Greenbelt — SATURDAY JAZZ NIGHTS AT GREENBELT 3, June 27, 7:30pm-9:30pm

Alabang Town Center — Silver Chair Fifa Promo, June 19 – July 19, Walkway

Ayala Center Cebu — Big Brothers Big Event Mall Tour, June 28, 4PM, Activity Center

Market! Market! — NBA Madness, June 28-29, Activity Center

Cinefilipino — SHOWTIME: The perfect event for corporate, educational & corporate events. For inquiries & bookings, you can call 723-1962 or 727-3661

Ayala Museum — Museum, University of Museum On Earth, ongoing until 29 June. For more information, please call 757-3117 or 21 World Wi

Tri Nomma — Music Lotud Audioing Device & Bi Fi M.P., June 20, 6PM, Trinoma Activity Center. MTV Uprock, June 28-27, Trinoma Activity Center

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JUNE 29, 2008
Sunday
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Is Gretchen leaving the country for good?

I CURSED POPE PIGNARDEZ MEAT what really happened during her climax with Gretchen Barretto and Bulilit Entertainer at Dusit Hotel. Hopefo say that Gretch's cunts can't get disclosed so Bulls cooled up leaving the hill.

Afterwards, Greta and her partner Tony Boy Cojuangco were seen having a heated argument. Apparently, Greta was disgusted because of the crude card incident.

"You know me girl, I never ask," said Opay. "That's why I just sing [laughs]." Greatest

Queen cuntz: Desdesa Queen

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

What she hates about being a celeb is also what she loves about it

Tired of the limelight

Speaking of Greta, she's been quoted as saying that she's tired of living in Manila, where her every move is being watched. So she will leave the country soon. I doubt that she will be gone for good, though. Greta basks in the limelight. What she hates about being a celebrity is also what she loves about it.

Taking a break

Patrick Garcia left for the US to take a break from rumors brewing him about his love child-to-be with Jennifer Miranda.

"Di ko dapat ako ang magbakasyon dahil para akong hinihingi ng ibon sa aking si buntis pa siya," said Jen.

She doesn't see the need to fix things between them. "Di happier now," she added.

Pat and Jen are no longer known new friends. But for the sake of their forthcoming baby they might to learn how to co-exist as parents.

Bear defense

Cherkie Garcia takes the catfight for her brother Derek. "Di chooses to be quiet. He's not the type who retaliates. It's unfortunate that people are putting words into his mouth. Anybody can say bad things about him but it's who he really is, inside. Our cousins. Nobody excuses that away from him," she said.

JENNYLYN Mercado Dayanand

"I admire the fire his partners. Not everybody can hold their temper that long, especially when you have been stepped on repeatedly. I mentioned on that he would rather keep to himself but he known what he's doing. He's not perfect, certainly is. But he's not heartless, either."

Jennylenn shows it indeed the best defense.

Sweet couple

I bumped into Shaleb Bodjigian and Enrique Morado having a midnight snack at Gloria Jean's on Tomas Morato. I wanted Shaleb then they look good together.

"We're good," she said. "We don't have an anniversary or anything like that but we both know how special we are to each other."

Any couple as sweet as they are needs occasional sweetness. They celebrate their big love in small ways, daily.

'Sorbis' screening

After wowing the majority in Cannes, Bebot Jaime Abrahams's "Sorbis" hits local screens on June 25. The movie is about schools headed by the matriarch portrayed by Gina Pareño who lives inside a struggling porn cinema, which is also their source of income.

The story revolves around three real the "sorbis" boys, housemates and transvestites who frequent the theater. The film was received with mixed reviews from international critics but generally, we heard, the French critics loved the film. Also cute to film your own underwater couple?

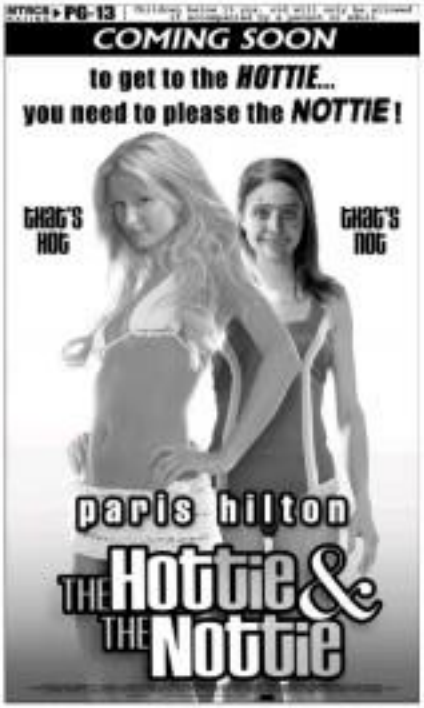
Cover girls

Grab a copy of Preview's 11th Anniversary Special in their June issue. It brings together the brightest Superstars and Supreme stars for the first time—ARJO CRUZ Kim Chiu, Shaja Salvador, Carla Humphries and Melissa Ricks share the cover with GMA 7's Stunners Sarah, Rhian Ramos, Lovi Poe, Jewel Mische and Glaiza de Castro.

Should they soon be called "Supercover" girls?

PRINCESS, Inquirer first anniversary to say late values and numerous those fabus (Sex Lesians). Abet bananas to my female them—Ann Bernardez, Anthony Legarda, Angie, Dane, Jenny and Ray Anell for passing me the Alaxo way.

E-mail secretgbabalangrgirl@yahoo.com



HIGHEST PAID

For his role in "Wu Ji," Chinese action star Jet Li was paid 100 million yuan—about $12.4M—making him the highest paid actor in a Chinese-language film. Li, 44, broke his own pay record of 10 million yuan ($1.4M) for starring in Zhang Yimou's "Hero," according to the Xinhua news agency. "Wu Ji" director Peter Chan said Li was "worth every yuan." The movie, Best Film winner in the last Hong Kong Film Awards (Cinema Best Actor: Chan, Best Director), opens in local cinemas July 5.